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TRAINING FOR NEW TRENDS IN CLUBS AND CENTERS FOR OLDER PERSONS. PROCEEDINGS OF A SEMINAR (ITHACA COLLEGE, ITHACA, NEW YORK, JUNE 23-25, 1966).

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THIS ADVANCED TRAINING SEMINAR WAS DESIGNED FOR STAFF MEMBERS OF SENIOR CITIZEN PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT NEW YORK STATE. POSITION PAPERS WERE PRESENTED ON THE SOCIAL FUTURE OF THE AGING AND ON EFFECTIVE MEANS OF SERVING THE INDIVIDUAL. WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD ON WAYS TO ACHIEVE A NEW SOCIAL ROLE FOR THE ELDERLY, THE GROUP METHOD IN CLUBS AND CENTERS, AND INDIVIDUAL NEEDS. PROGRAM SKILLS DEMONSTRATIONS DEALT WITH USES OF FOLK AND SQUARE DANCING, MUSIC ACTIVITIES, PHYSICAL FITNESS ACTIVITIES, PUPPETRY, AND BOOK AND DISCUSSION GROUPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS. RECENT SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS WERE REVIEWED--A PRIMARY SCHOOL "SUBSTITUTE GRANDPARENT" PROGRAM IN WHITE PLAINS, THE TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS TO VISIT SHUT-INS, PROPOSED COUNTY-WIDE AND NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMS OF SERVICE TO THE AGED, TEACHER TRAINING FOR "DEN MOTHERS," SPECIAL HEALTH SERVICES BY THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE, AND THE FOURSCORE CLUB IN CORTLAND. A PANEL ALSO DISCUSSED MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH, NEW GOALS FOR SOCIAL ACTION, MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF OLDER PERSONS AS VOLUNTEERS, LIMITED PAID EMPLOYMENT FOR OLDER PERSONS, AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. (THE DOCUMENT INCLUDES SEMINAR IMPLICATIONS AND AN APPENDIX.) (LY)

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TRAINING FOR NEW TRENDS

IN CLUBS AND CENTERS FOR OLDER PERSONS

PROCEEDINGS OF SEMINAR

CONDUCTED AT ITHACA COLLEGE,

ITHACA , NEW YORK, JUNE 23-25, 1966

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PART I

INTRODUCTION TO SEMINAR

FOREWORD

Warren C. Shaver, Chief, Bureau of Special Continuing Education, Division of Continuing Education, State Education Department

INTRODUCTION

Edward G. Lindsey, Member, State Recreation Council for the Elderly; Director of Health Services, State Charities Aid Association, Buffalo, N. Y.

TNT SEMINAR

Ollie A. Randall, Chairman, State Recreation Council for the Elderly; Vice President National Council on the Aging

PART II

POSITION PAPERS

THE SOCIAL FUTURE OF THE AGING

Stephen Miller, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, The Florence Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare, Brandeis University

FOCUSING ON THE INDIVIDUAL

Leo Laks, Director, Council Center for Senior Citizens, Brooklyn Section, National Council of Jewish Women

PART III

WORKSHOPS

Summary of Workshop Discussions

PART IV

PROGRAM SKILLS DEMONSTRATIONS

FOLK AND SQUARE DANCING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Melville F. Daus, Director of Recreation, Department of Parks and Recreation, New York City

MUSIC FOR SENIOR CITIZEN GROUPS

Evelyn Bayliss, Instructor, Lockport Senior Citizens Center, Lockport, New York

PHYSICAL FITNESS IN A SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER

Frances Bauman, Director, Great Neck Senior Citizens Center, Great Neck, New York

MARIONETTES . . . A NEW KIND OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Barbara Jamieson, Director, Glen Head Golden Ring, Glen Head, New York

Elizabeth Crum, Director, Roslyn Senior Activity Club, Roslyn, New York

MEETING READING NEEDS IN A SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB

Estelle Noon, Book Discussion Leader, Westbury Senior Citizens, Westbury, New York

CURRENT EVENTS DISCUSSION GROUP

Sylvia Bernstein, Curriculum Specialist in Fundamental Adult Education, Bureau of Community Education, Board of Education, New York City

PART V

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

A PRIMARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

Ruth Ginzler, Administrator, Adult Community House, White Plains, New York

TRAINING FRIENDLY VISITORS

Hilda Ross, Director, Northern Westchester Assembly of Senior Centers, Mt. Kisco, New York

THE "DAILY HELLO"

Alfred Volpe, Supervisor of Recreation, Recreation Department, New Rochelle, New York

PLANNING SERVICES FOR THE AGED AT THE COUNTY LEVEL

Bernard Schwartzberg, Social Work Consultant Project PRYME; Chairman, Health, Education Committee, Member of Policy Committee, Senior Center of Nassau County, Uniondale, New York

TRAINING TO TEACH

Beatrice K. Winik, Director, Katherine Engel Center for Older People, New York City

PROGRAM DESIGN FOR NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES OPPORTUNITY CENTERS FOR THE ELDERLY

Joseph Despres, President, New York Association of Senior Centers, Inc., New York City

THE FOURSCORE CLUB

Theresa Benedick, Director, Cortland Senior Citizens, Cortland, New York

HEALTH SERVICES IN A CENTER PROGRAM

Louis Berman, Director, Tilden Day Center for Older People, Department of Welfare, New York City

PART VI

PANEL DISCUSSION — PROBLEM CLINIC

PARTICIPANTS

MODERATOR: Edward G. Lindsey, State Recreation Council for the Elderly

PANEL: Elizabeth Dale, Director, Lockport Senior Citizens Center, Lockport, New York

Vito Giordano, Supervisor, Senior Citizens Activities, Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, County of Westchester, White Plains, New York

Sylvia Greenfield, Director, Division of Day Centers for Older Persons, Bureau of Special Services, Department of Welfare, New York City

Barbara Jamieson, Leader, Glen Head Golden Ring, Glen Head, New York

Lucille Keefe, Director, Senior Citizens Center, Utica, New York

Bernard Schwartzberg, Social Work Consultant Project PRYME; Chairman, Health Education Committee, Member of Policy Committee, Senior Center of Nassau County, Uniondale, New York

PART VII

SEMINAR IMPLICATIONS

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CENTER PROGRAMS

Gertrude Bolden, Deputy Director, Bureau of Special Services, Department of Welfare, New York City

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF NON-CENTER PROGRAMS

Joyce Williams, Director of Senior Citizens, Town of Huntington, L. I., New York.

Part VIII

APPENDIX

PART I

INTRODUCTION TO SEMINAR

FOREWORD

Warren C. Shaver, Chief
Bureau of Special Continuing Education

New York State has long been on the "leading edge" of developments in the field of education — recreation programs for older citizens. The residential leadership training seminar at Ithaca College in June of 1966 was a pioneering effort to keep abreast of the many needs of a changing society. To the best of our knowledge, it was the first attempt to bring together on a statewide basis those individual leaders responsible for local programs for the elderly.

A statewide committee carefully planned the seminar, shaping the format, the methodology, and the content. The planners drew freely from a century of experience in adult education and from more than a decade of experience in the operation of programs for the elderly.

Because the sessions of the seminar "Training for New Trends" were unique, rich in ideas, and helpful to the novice as well as to the sophisticated leader, the Division of Continuing Education of the State Education Department believes the Proceedings will be of special interest to educators and laymen.

In the belief that the proceedings will contribute to more enriched programs for older citizens of this State, we recommend them to the careful reading of every thoughtful person.

Mrs. Henrietta F. Rabe, Associate in Education for the Aging, Bureau of Special Continuing Education, served as the Conference Coordinator and was responsible for the organization and editing of these proceedings.

INTRODUCTION

Edward G. Lindsey

The members of the State Recreation Council for the Elderly are proud to join with our colleagues in the Bureau of Special Continuing Education of the State Education Department and the directors of senior citizen centers throughout the State of New York in presenting the proceedings of the workshop held at Ithaca College. The 3 days devoted to Training for New Trends — TNT as it is affectionately called — represent, we think, a milestone in leadership for older persons in the Empire State.

This pioneering venture in advanced training for staff members of senior citizen programs follows an earlier milestone in the history of our State. This was the passage, in 1956, of legislation to provide State aid to municipalities to encourage and assist in the development of programs of education and recreation for the elderly. Administration of the new legislation was assigned to the State Education Department, Bureau of Special Continuing Education. The legislation provided for appointment by the Commissioner of Education of a State Recreation Council for the Elderly to assist in carrying out the law.

In 25 years we have watched the number of our citizens over the age of 65 jump from 9 million in 1940 to 19 million in 1965. This fact, together with the sweeping changes in our society which have brought earlier retirement, better health, and more years of leisure, underscore the wisdom of New York's advanced legislation. The 10 years since 1956 have shown a most gratifying growth in the number of municipal and other local programs to meet the needs of these increasing millions, until today almost 100 communities within the State have State-aided programs. For the fiscal year 1966-67 this will represent almost a half-million dollars of State aid. When the matching contribution of localities is added to this figure, the full expenditure is well beyond the million dollar figure, since many communities have gone beyond the required 50 percent matching fund.

All of this progress has occurred in a relatively short time. New ground was broken every step of the way, new experience was gained, and many important issues for future decision and experiment were identified. In 1956 we knew more about *needs* than their *solution* since an awareness of those needs was just emerging in many communities throughout the State.

In the light of this situation, the State Recreation Council for the Elderly and the State Education Department have given practical recognition to the necessity for gradual development of the program. There was from the beginning, and there continues to be, recognition of the overriding need for high standards in local programs and for the best professional staff available to direct the kinds of local programs which meet the needs of our senior citizens.

One of the striking facts which came to the fore time and again during the 3 days of strenuous sessions, was the realization that not only must we "tool up" more adequately for what we are doing, but we must also face realistically the program requirements for the next generation of retired people. Retirees are becoming an increasingly large segment of our population. They will bring with them an increasingly higher level of education and a desire not only for recreation, but for worthwhile continuing education, greater self-fulfillment and growth, and an opportunity to be of *service* rather than to be *served*. This clear fact implies not only a greater investment in the programs themselves, but the necessity for the best training and the highest level of staff recruitment possible in order to insure quality programs.

This is the background against which preparations were made for this first workshop which had been requested of the State staff during the past few years. It should be viewed as a beginning and not an end.

At this point, it might be well to mention the plans which have been made by the Department and the Council to offer courses for leaders of group work programs for older persons at the Adelphi University Graduate School of Social Work, and the School of Social Welfare of the State University of New York at Buffalo during the coming year. These will be noncredit, 10-session courses introducing social group work principles and practice, and which are directed at improving the skills of nonprofessionals who are working in group programs for the aging. This is a very real "first" for New York State. We are looking forward to the accomplishment of this training as one further step toward the achievement of programs of ever-higher quality.

The record attendance at the workshop was most gratifying to all concerned. It was ample testimony to the value of an undertaking which was begun with great trepidation. The spirit of give and take, the long hours of devotion shown by all of the participants, and the range of valuable ideas developed as evidenced by these proceedings augur well for the continuation of such sessions.

We are proud of the "front-line troops" who are doing such a fine job throughout the State. Our appreciation goes in full measure to those who contributed so much as speakers and discussion leaders, as well as to Ithaca College and its President, Howard Dillingham, who made our stay so pleasant. The members of the Council particularly wish to give recognition here to the capable and untiring efforts of the State staff. The success of the program is a tribute to the skill and devotion of their labors.

Where do we go from here? We can and must continue to move forward. Macauley in his *History of England,* which was published in 1848, made a statement which may be relevant:

> It is in some sense unreasonable and ungrateful in us to be constantly discontented with a situation that is constantly improving. But, in truth, there is constant improvement precisely because there is constant discontent. If we were perfectly satisfied with the present, we would cease to contrive, to labor, and to save with a view to the future.

TNT SEMINAR

Ollie A. Randall

It is reason for real regret that I cannot be with you in person for this occasion, toward which your Program Committee and the State Council on Recreation for the Elderly have been planning for some time. It is one of the more important events in a State program to reach older people in their home communities. As one reviews plans that have been arranged for the sessions, there is little doubt as to the high quality of the personnel involved. The combination of a pleasant setting, effective presentations, interesting discussions, and demonstrations provide stimulation and encouragement for the work in which we are all engaged. Certainly the presence of each of you indicates your commitment and, yes, even your dedication, to the goals which the "center movement" is designed to achieve — not for the centers but for those whose lives it is hoped the centers can help to make more meaningful.

Centers — What of Them Today and Tomorrow?

It has been noted over and over again that the "center for the elderly" is actually the only really new social service innovation of the past generation. It is the only new agency which has, during that generation, developed slowly and, I believe, soundly along the lines which makes it capable of fairly prompt response to the needs of our swiftly changing society. I have been very much intrigued by the description of our present day society by Gyorgy Kepes of M.I.T., who writes as follows:

"The formlessness of our present life has three obvious aspects: First, our environmental chaos, which accounts for inadequate living conditions, waste of human and material resources; Second, our social chaos, — lack of common ideas, common feelings, common purposes; Third, our inner chaos — individual inability to live in harmony with one's self, inability to accept one's whole self and let body, feelings, and thought dwell together in friendship." With this as the environment in which *everyone* is living, it seems to me that older people particularly are living in double, if not triple, jeopardy, a situation which calls for action by them as well as us to reduce the "formlessness of life" during the later years. This is imperative if we are to have

the promise, if not the absolute guarantee, of enjoying the latter part of our lives. That this society will inevitably change even more rapidly during the next generation makes it essential that we not cling to established methods of organization or operation. We should, in the "center program," take advantage of our relative youth and its reputed flexibility by being responsive, and willing to recognize the meaning of environmental changes and their impact upon the lives of older people and upon our services.

Certainly, if anything is clear in this uncertain world, it is that change is the order of the day and that we must find what is implicit in it to guide our own participation or adaptation. What is imposed upon us by our place in the social scene is that we must be constantly alert for ways of rendering effective service now and of anticipating, as far as humanly possible, the services we may be called upon to render in the future. This has been one of the rare elements in the program of which we are a part, and it is incumbent upon us not to yield to the temptation to become "traditionalists." In our response to this lies the real challenge, for our future as well as the future of a large number of older people.

Truth or Fiction — Myth or Fact

Much has been said and written to the effect that we are a wasteful country — wasteful of both natural and human resources. In "The Human Use of Human Beings"— any use of a human being in which less is demanded of him, and less is attributed to him than he deserves, is a degradation and a waste. This describes very well what is said to be the waste of the great wisdom, experience, and talent that is vested in the steadily enlarging group of older people no longer actively engaged in the labor market or in family life. There is no group in any community that can better test the truth of this claim than the group you represent. Certainly those with whom we work have demonstrated a genuine talent for staying alive — a high "SQ," Survival Quotient — even if they have not had similar success in living full lives. This talent is one which needs both exploration and exploiting, and one which needs to be given a whole new dimension. I believe this is possible with interested and trained leadership, through the groups which attend our centers — and even with those whom we ought to reach but do not. The recent "Medicare Alert" program has uncovered large numbers of people who can be given new life and who can help

to renew and revitalize our own ideas as to how our programs of service might be more effective.

Another group with which we must be ready to work is that referred to in vivid terms as the "new breed of retiree," which will call upon our ingenuity in providing service and, very probably, will produce new resources which were not present in the earlier days of center development. They are younger, apt to be better educated, better financed, and to know what they want or what interests and pursuits can be maintained and even further developed through center membership. Their most prominent characteristic may be their ability to make their own decisions and choices, either independently or with assistance which is less than intensive professional counselling. I confess to being a maverick among social workers since I do not believe that *every* human being, just because he is an older person and the community has not responded with adequate resources to make it possible to follow his own bent, is in need of "intensive casework." It seems to me that one of the tasks ahead of us is to learn to distinguish between the person who is capable of knowing what he wants, and the one who needs basic guidance in discovering both himself and his ways of meeting his own needs. True social service is, and must be, an integral part of every act and every relationship in the center, but it can be reflected in manner and in understanding without undue emphasis on the more obvious component of "depth counselling." As I reminded a group in Washington over a year ago, one of our real challenges is to know whether we, who preach so much to others, can really shift from a "problem centered" approach in our group and become actually convinced of the positive elements which I believe reside in every individual and in the group, so that they can be fully utilized for their mutual benefit.

The Present Scene

The present scene is characterized by a very "splintered" and uncoordinated approach on the part of both governmental units and the professions, with training of sorts for work with older people either in process or being contemplated at every turn. We need coordination of efforts and programs at all levels of government. One of the hopeful signs is that the State Council on Recreation for the Elderly will be — and is — working closely with the Office for the Aging. Jointly the attempt will be to focus on the delivery of quality service that warrants both the energy and the money invested. As we look ahead to next

year, the next decade, and the next generation, our criteria for any improvement in the lives of older people achieved through our centers will have to be some measure of their own satisfaction and of their own relationships to the community, to their families, and to each other, as well as of their own inner sense of well-being. With this as a goal we can proceed with a singleness of purpose but without a singleness of effort, which would in itself deny *one* of the purposes for this institute, which will, I am sure, be a memorable one for all of us.

PART II

POSITION PAPERS

THE SOCIAL FUTURE OF THE AGING

Stephen J. Miller

More often than not, when we think about aging, we think of the economic and health problems of people who are growing old. We picture the older person as a consumer with a reduced income of declining purchasing power, struggling in an expanding economy to maintain an adequate standard of living and a satisfactory level of health. Occupational retirement and the accompanying reduction in income does pose problems for older people but a material approach to the problems of aging, based on the assumption that they are basically economic, neglects the social implications of growing old. The aging do have money problems. The average older person needs more money than is usually available to him for purchasing consumer goods such as food and medicine, and services, particularly medical care, but there are programs of public assistance and other legislation which reduce further the demands on his limited income. Numerous income supplements make the problems of aging less economic and more sociological than is generally realized.

Today, I will talk about the sociological situation and future of the aging. I *will not* talk about older people who are suffering failing health, people who want nothing more than "to be left alone" and become socially isolated, or older people who have voluntarily retired and look forward to not participating greatly in the activity of our social world. The older people I will be talking about are those who wish to remain active and continue participating in the social life of their family and the community. My remarks are my best guess of what I think the social situation of older people is and what it might be in the not too distant future. A good deal of what I say is not original but the result of thinking by other men, particularly Arnold M. Rose, University of Minnesota, and Robert Morris, Brandeis University, both of whom have done a great deal of thinking about the problems and place of older people in society.[1] The purpose of my comments is to outline the social dimension of aging and indicate those

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[1] There are a number of other men at the Florence Heller Graduate School of Brandeis University who have, in one way or other, influenced my thinking — particularly, Kermit Schooler, now engaged in research on matters of social gerontology, and Robert Binstock, presently implementing a training program in social gerontology. I am also indebted to Douglas Hink, Ph.D., for reading the original manuscript and Carol Estes, who has made many comments which have been of help to me in understanding the problems of the aging.

problems with which older people must deal and, by so doing, shape their own future. I will focus on the values of our society as the background or social context in which the aging must make a place for themselves; also, I will indicate the manner in which they may participate to establish a social identity and shape a social future.

First, a brief bit of American history. Life in rural America was not separated into parts and places of activity. The place of work was the home and the work that was done was important and had meaning for the family. There was no problem of finding things for older people to do and no need to worry about the ways in which they would occupy themselves — people were working members of a family until failing health forced withdrawal from most, if not all, activity. We talk, today, about the economic and social roles of family members but these are only sophisticated expressions of the earlier idea of "doing for the family" — however, not only the doing but the family is no longer what it was in American society. An obvious change in the arrangement of the American family is that older people no longer live under the same roof with their adult children. This is, for many people, the most undesirable characteristic of the American family. If we ask what is desirable about older people living with their adult children, we are told that (1) by so doing the young are able to care for the old who are unable to manage for themselves, (2) children provide a place in which to live for parents who cannot afford separate housing, and (3) living together provides opportunity for companionship and emotional response between members of a family. If these are the reasons (and they appear to be), then the changes in the American family, in most part, a result of our industrial revolution, may not be critical for the social future of the aging. A number of studies indicate that the decline of the family may have been exaggerated or, if the family did deteriorate at the turn of the century, it may be reviving and older people do still have a part, although a different place, in family life. For example, with the usual exceptions, older people are not, as they are usually thought to be, abandoned by children who have moved away or who rarely if ever visit them. In fact, contacts with adult children are frequently (approximately 1 a week) and 1 of 3 older people live on the same block or in the same neighborhood as an adult child.

The change of America from an agricultural to an industrial nation may not have curtailed family life but there is no doubt of its impact on the social life of people. Work (away from the home) became the

central life interest, regulating the economy and establishing the Puritan tradition of work as a major value in our society. The work a man did was the basis of his social identity and labels were attached to various types of work, placing men in categories and locating them in the patterned activities of society. The new America emphasized efficiency and production as the measures of a man and established his value to society in terms of his ability to play a functional role in the industrial system. If we are to anticipate the social future of the aging, we must understand this social, as well as the more obvious economic, value of work.

Our industrial society has evolved a policy for old age which provides pensions, housing subsidy, and medical care at that time when the worker, due to his advanced years, is no longer required to trade his time in labor for the necessities of subsistence. The purported purpose of such a policy is that the worker, by his lengthy labor, has earned the right to rewards which will make the remaining years comfortable, but it has been tacitly understood that the worker is allowed to retire and receive the accompanying benefits because he is no longer the efficient worker he once was. That is, the policy had been a way to facilitate the removal of personnel from work they are arbitrarily considered no longer capable of doing in our complex and demanding society. This is not to say that, for example, the health benefits negotiated today by labor unions and the programs they are planning are not needed — they are, and these programs are valuable social welfare advances towards a time when increased social security benefits and liberalized company benefits will reduce economic barriers to the obtaining of medical care. Rather, it is to say that there are advantages to maintaining the retirement policy that has existed although the original reasons for that policy are fast disappearing. For example, failing health, which had been a characteristic of aging, no longer prevents people from remaining active, but the anticipated impact of continued employment of the aging on a labor force and economy increasingly concerned with unemployment, acts in the same way as the original reasons to exclude the aging worker. Occupational retirement is not so much a system of rewards as it is the way in which a labor force and employment balance is maintained. The benefits and efforts to better the lot of older workers serves to encourage voluntary withdrawal and facilitate their involuntary removal from the work world. The older people who are so removed (retired) suffer a social loss — the loss of an occupational identity and a functional role in society.

Work not only produces income but provides a meaningful group with which to identify and a social situation in which to develop a sense of social worth. The work that people do is taken very much for granted, but it is important to have an occupational identity if people are to manage the varing social performances demanded of them. The occupations of people establish their positions in the social scheme of things, allowing others to evaluate them and place them in a social context within which their activity may be understood. For example, we have one opinion of a man who is working and another of a man who is not working. A result of this difference between the men is that we will lend one money but not the other. If the working man is a physician, we will lend him more money than we would lend a school-teacher. This is an obvious example, but we make many such decisions everyday about people on no other basis except what they do for a living. Work is the social substance of which our activity is made and provides the rationale for the ways in which social roles are organized and activity is substantiated. The retired person has lost his occupational role, the base of his social identity, and he must find a new role in the future.

For some time before he retires from his occupation the worker is encouraged by his family, friends, and employer, to prepare for his work-less future by spending his leisure time in activity which is of some interest to him. It is assumed that the problems of social adjustment will be solved if people will engage in some sort of activity to fill their leisure time. This approach to utilization of leisure is based on what I have called "the contemporary emphasis on action."[2] Activity of any sort is valued over nonactivity and, in the contemporary scheme of work and leisure, the older person showing an interest in some activity is of more social worth than the person who disengages and no longer participates in any activity. Leisure activity, therefore, should reduce the social loss of the aged. The person who is free of work should be socially able to facilitate an adjustment to growing old by engaging in activity which has meaning for him. If this was all there was to the problem of growing old, participation in leisure groups would be a new career with a future for older people. But the work which people are ultimately free of was exactly that which allowed them to justify leisure or, as Margaret Mead (the anthropologist) has

[2] Stephen J. Miller. "Older People and Their Social World." *The Social Dilemma of the Aging Leisure Participant.* Arnold M. Rose and Warren A. Peterson, eds. (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Co., 1965)

put it, work is not only necessary to obtain the means (income) but is necessary for the right to leisure.

When people are working they are free to use leisure any way they choose because leisure (recreation) is considered necessary for relief from the fatigue, boredom, and strain of work. People who work are not required to justify their leisure since the halo effect of labor does give them a right to rest, relaxation, and recreation. For example, the working man occupied in leisure activity will be seen by others as engaged in "recreation," whereas the retired are seen as occupying "free" time. In other words, the variety of things people could do to make up for the loss of an occupational role may have no further social value than that they are "activity."

A career of leisure (recreation) is characteristic of the socially immature (young) or the socially superannuated (old). For the older person, a career of leisure can only add to his social loss and negate any social benefits that he may derive from remaining active. The retired leisure participant is in a unique position not only does he have to find an activity in which to participate but, once having found something to do, if he wishes to reduce his social loss he must establish that the activity is of some value for the young as well as the old; that activity must be appropriate[3] in terms of what people in general think is important for our society. The question, then, is in what activity may older people find a new role?

During the past, American society has faced the reality of aging as a physical, economic, and/or social condition which makes comfortable living difficult for people when they are old. There is, in my opinion, no more eloquent statement of the difficulty of growing old under adverse conditions than the title of a book on aging by Natalie Cabot, *You Can't Count on Dying*. An important question, for the young as well as the old, about an American society is, simply: What are the possible ways of improving the conditions under which people must live? Needless to say, this includes the conditions during the latter part of life.

Physicians and their improved technology as well as public health advances have reduced the physical difficulty of aging by providing the means of reaching old age in better (if not "good") health. We now know that existing material benefits provided to the old as rewards for lengthy labor or inducements to curtail labor are not enough to

[3] Margaret Mead. "The Pattern of Leisure in Contemporary Culture". *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.*

meet the needs of older consumers in an expanding economy — therefore, additional benefits have been arranged by amending the Social Security Act which (in the immediate future) should act to reduce the economic difficulty of the old. More recently, we recognized the social implications of aging; particularly the implications of losing a functional role in society and the difficulty in finding new roles for the elderly. There have been (at least) these advances toward improving conditions for older people in society. The purpose of all of these efforts has been to evolve a policy and plan programs *for* the aging which would facilitate their adjustment to the particular difficulties of growing old.

The future, however, will not be the same as the past — there is every reason to anticipate, because of the many health and welfare advances, that older people will want less done for them and take the opportunity to do more for themselves and others in our society. Through our search for new roles for the elderly we are preparing for the future — a time when we will no longer contrive activity with which older people may fill an empty life but attempt to include the elderly in the planning of programs and the making of policy which will benefit us all. For example, older people are taking an active part on the committees of the United Community Services as well as the boards of its affiliated agencies in Detroit, Michigan. People reaching age 60 are continuing to participate in civic matters and, in increasing numbers, hold important positions of influence in the community. A question which, however, must be asked when contemplating the future is: Have we by our past efforts with older people included and interested them or are they, in spite of us and our efforts, taking more opportunities to participate in the planning of programs and the making of policy? Older people, in my opinion, are rapidly becoming aware of themselves as a source of services rather than as the recipients of services and we must, if we are to work effectively with and make maximum use of the potential of the old, understand the circumstances which are changing old people from a social category that we do *for*, to a group that can, does, and will do more in the future.

The old are becoming a subculture which will influence the lives of those of the elderly who participate in it and, by so doing, make a place within the general American culture. When writing of the participation of older people in community matters, Nathaniel Brooks states that older and/or retired civic leaders were not aware of themselves as representing the subculture of older and/or retired people,

nor did the boards or committees on which they served regard them in this way — however, he did indicate a need for participation in planning and policymaking by older people who are aware of themselves as members of the aging subculture in America. For example, the elderly in a community who are aware of the distinctive characteristics and needs of the old could organize and act in the interest of older citizens. The senior center, as Ollie Randall has indicated, is an organization with the specific purpose of working directly and exclusively with and in the interest of older Americans or, in other words, with the members of the aging subculture in America.[4]

A subculture develops within the larger culture when the members of a category (for example, teenaged, middleaged, etc.) have more to do with each other than they do with other people. There are a number of reasons why this has happened among older and/or retired people.[5] The elderly have in the past been excluded from participation in many activities of the general American culture and this fact, the exclusion of the elderly, is what makes it necessary to ask if advances for the elderly are not made in spite of our efforts on their behalf as a society.

The people who reach age 65, share common generational experiences and are subject to the same circumstances in a demanding and rapidly changing society. The following circumstances of our society are those which act to create a special group of the aging:

(1) the members, as indicated, are excluded from interacting with other people;

(2) the group members have a great number of interests in common or share common problems;

(3) increases in the standard of living and level of education have resulted in people reaching retirement age with funds, knowledge, and skill with which to engage in organized activity;

(4) a decline in the number of self-employed who could work as long as they wanted, as well as increased compulsory retirement, removes people from general society which obliged them to interact with others of all ages;

(5) social welfare services have brought the aging together (group work) and increased the opportunities for older people to identify with each other; increasing numbers of retirement homes,

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[4] Ollie Randall. *TNT Leadership Seminar Proceedings.* (1966)
[5] Arnold M. Rose. *The Gerontologist II.* (1962)

nursing homes, housing projects, etc., sponsored by public and private agencies have acted to separate older people from the rest of society;

(6) the aging have acted to segregate themselves from the general population by living in retirement communities or preferring specific locations with mild climates, for example, Florida, or by joining special interest groups such as Golden Age Clubs, Senior Citizens, etc., participation in which reinforces the stereotype of the aging as people to be set apart from those who are not old;

The conditions which are resulting in a subculture of the aging, affording older people a distinct place in society apart from those under 65, also create new problems for older people:

(1) older people may become a part of a subculture of the aging, belong to a variety of groups, and find a new role, but the way in which they were removed from old roles does not reflect favorably upon their ability to perform social roles — that is, older people must continue to operate in an age-graded social system which defines them as people who are socially superannuated and of less value than people under 65;

(2) the aging as a group are subject to what amounts to prejudice and segregation — for example: job discrimination against the older worker results in only 1 out of 3 men over 65 working, and of that number most are self-employed or working for local, state, and federal agencies; our policy for old age provides special facilities and programs for older people or, "separate but equal" facilities;

(3) the aging are a growing minority to whom negative characteristics have been attributed, but they are developing group pride and identity (becoming an "ingroup") as well as reacting to younger generation (the "outgroup") by manifesting resentment and contemplating social action to remove the sources of that resentment.

Older people have been complaining about the lack of money, poor housing, the difficulty in obtaining medical care, and general neglect by society. The aging have become aware that these problems are not only faced by individuals but by the aging as a group. For example, because of medical advances, more people are growing old and, there-

fore, more people are subject to the debilitating effects of chronic illness (46 percent of deaths in 1900 were caused by chronic illnesses but 81 percent were so caused by 1955), a condition which required political action and Federal legislation to provide a program of medical care for the aging which, in its turn, gave older people a sense of common need and purpose as a group; older people have begun to take an interest in social action and, as a minority group, have supported certain government legislation of particular importance to people who are growing old. Their support of Congressional bills for financing health care and opposition to groups not in favor of such legislation is a significant example of the aging on their way to becoming a voting bloc, political pressure group, and lobby for benefits for the aging.

The research data are not conclusive and it is possible that a negative opinion of the aging and their place in society may not necessarily be incompatible with a personal sense of well-being and social worth. If this is the case, then the aging may not develop an age-group identification and set themselves in opposition to those under 65. Sociologists need to conduct systematic studies of the formation of the aging group in American society in the same way that they have studied ethnic, regional, and occupational groups. Without studies to the contrary, we must assume that the aging are developing a subculture, the interests and concerns of which are the basis for their acting on their own behalf, to improve the conditions under which they must live during the latter part of life. There will be, in the future, more and more older people refusing to "disengage" and who continue their participation in the civic and social affairs of our society. These, however, may be the people who are now, before they grow old and/or retire, active in such affairs. But more and more people are now active than were in the past and these people with greater funds, knowledge, and skill will not relinquish the parts they play in our various institutions and agencies. The elderly of the future will be more articulate and demand a voice and vote in a variety of economic, political, and social matters, but will they lend their abilities to the tasks related to the particular problems and concerns of older people? I think not. These are the people who are less likely to be excluded from society in general and, in fact, they will refuse to be excluded. What, then, of the older people who are less articulate and therefore, subject to exclusion by society?

The organizations which have as a specific purpose the advancement of older people (for example, the senior center) must promote activities necessary to not only attract and interest older people in shaping their

own future but provide training and experience allowing them to engage effectively in the planning of programs and making of policy. For example, an apprenticeship has been suggested for older people at the lower levels of organizations to prepare them for membership on the boards and committees of civic, social, and other agencies. The United Auto Workers is planning to offer training courses which would prepare retirees for a place in community organizations. The curriculum of that training program will include the topics of community organization, social structure of agencies, and management and finance practices, as well as other matters related to the planning and operation of programs and agencies. Needless to say, in my opinion, the UAW approach, training trade union members for community service after retirement, is a promising way of including older people and making use of the skills, knowledge, and time they have to meet some of the manpower needs of society. Not all labor unions nor all communities will undertake such training. There will be a need for programs which will prepare the elderly for this new action role in the community. There will be a need for programs of continuing education of all kinds to meet what, it is anticipated, will be an increasing demand for information, training, and preparation by the elderly for their place in the community.

All the elderly will not be able to participate in community action at the planning and/or policy level. Older people wanting a career at some lower level in the community may also base the worth of that activity on service, that is, social worth is established by providing a service needed by the community. This is the "service rationale" for a new career and is in keeping with the contemporary emphasis on action as well as demonstrating a value of our society. There are, of course, other types of activity which are contributory to the general good of society and which may be employed by the elderly as a basis for a new career. The volunteers, those of the elderly who offer their leisure to others, (for examples, a retired cabinetmaker may supplement the efforts of the high school manual arts teacher, or the older woman who is a part of the community hospital) are providing a service by acting as auxiliaries in support of people engaged in essential work. The activities in which the elderly may engage are parts of larger work systems which lend older people vicarious status, authority, and other meaningful satisfactions which operate to the social advantage of the participants and allow them to establish a service rationale for their new careers. Activity which is educational or develops a skill may be

the start of a new career, if there exists the potentiality for its productive application. Older people, if they are to act as an auxiliary, need educational programs which will result in knowledge and skill with which to provide services. These programs are in addition to those in community planning and action — adult education of more general interest.

The value of service is not the only value placed on activity in America. People may start a new career by becoming "economically engaged," by participating in remunerative activity which may or may not be recognized as contributing to the general good. They may, in other words, employ an "economic rationale" for a new career and also reflect a contemporary value of society, an economic ethic, so to speak. Such activity will not be thought of as far different from actual work since, like work, it offers a reward for labor and permits us a dollars and cents estimate of the worth of people.

Older people engaged in activity without an economic rationale may be defined as superfluous and without social substance, but those who are economically engaged have a recognizable and valuable goal and, therefore, are embarked on a worthwhile career. A notable example of the way in which the economic rationale may be employed is the elderly American collector of coins, stamps, books, and what have you. This type of leisure activity by the aging is similar to the major perspective of modern collecting which parallels and reflects growing interest of the general population in the stock market, investment programs, etc., and is focused on the monetary and investment aspects of collecting.

The service and economic rationales for new careers for the elderly have been discussed as if they represent two separate spheres of activity for older people. They are not, however, mutually exclusive but variations of the same process for the social support of a career. For example, any collecting activity which is remunerative also requires classification, description, etc., which is educational, and the collections may be exhibited and/or presented as a public service. This rationale, the public reasons why people do what they do, is similar to the process by which people acquire an ideology while developing an identification with an occupation. Older people, in much the same way as people preparing for an occupation, attempt to establish the worth of their work, want to establish the worth of the avocational activity which will be their new career.

We have, in fact, acted as if the rationale for new careers for the elderly was solely service and, thereby, may have limited the effectiveness of efforts to include the elderly in community affairs and service.

For example, of a sample of older people in Michigan, less than 10 percent were involved and only another 5 percent were interested in community service. "This suggests," writes Robert Morris, *et al.*, "that community agencies have not gone out of their way to solicit the time and talent of retired persons, that the community apparently views its older citizens as more in need of receiving services than of contributing them and that older people have not found the available jobs to be attractive, stimulating or *worthwhile*" — worthwhile not only in the social but economic sense as well. The activity of elderly volunteers must not only be a service but may have to be remunerative — thereby, indicating the degree to which that service is worthwhile.

There are opportunities for volunteer service in a variety of places (for example, in the neighborhood, social agencies, nursing homes, hospitals, and at schools) but the elderly are so engaged at a level of activity which is not important or in ways which do not appeal to older people. One reason for the lack of appeal is that volunteers, more often than not, work without remuneration — a state of affairs which reflects the attitude of society regarding the worth of that work. The results of a study and demonstration program conducted by Brandeis University indicates that remuneration may be necessary if service by retirees is to provide new roles for the elderly — in other words it must be a combination of the service and economic rationales.[6]

The conditions which, in light of the results of that study, must be met in order for senior citizens to participate are:

(1) good health, which those who are now reaching age 65 are likely to have;

(2) transportation, now, more often than not, available;

(3) remuneration. The importance of paying for services provided by the elderly (introducing aspects of work) has been recognized and advances are being made towards making such activity one in which older people may become economically engaged. There has been, for example, a bill introduced to establish a National Senior Community Service Corps — the bill would allocate money under a new title of the Older Americans Act to reimburse volunteers up to a maximum of $125 a month. In my opinion if the increasing number of elderly volunteers are to be utilized, they must be reimbursed by programs such as the

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[6] R. Morris, C. Lambert Jr. and M. Guberman. *New Roles For the Elderly.* (Brandeis University, 1964).

Senior Community Service Corps and be prepared for the work they will do at all levels and not only the policy level, by programs such as that planned and implemented by the United Automobile Workers.

The education and training of the elderly will, with no doubt, act to further development of an aging subculture which will set the old apart from the young — but, an important difference is that the elderly will no longer suffer from the loss of a functional role in society. We do not educate and train people for no reason and, by this we recognize the need for the social worth of the elderly. Nor do we pay people to benefit only themselves — in fact, if we do so, we defeat the purpose of making this a worthwhile activity rather than "therapy" for old people. The result, in other words, will be to reduce the social loss of the retiree, facilitate a sense of his being of social worth by his engaging in activity which is of value for the young as well as the old. The social character of the aging subculture, in this way, is changing from the negative (a group of people removed because they are no longer capable of participating in society) to the positive (a group of people engaged in activity meeting contemporary manpower needs).

Summary

Many people think that the most challenging problem of aging is finding a solution to the "roleless role of the aging" by *inventing* new leisure activities and functional roles for older people.[7] I agree that a solution to the social dilemma of many older people is the finding of new roles, but am of the opinion that those new roles for the elderly will only have social worth if they are not artifically created. The conclusion I came to after a review of the research and writing on the problems of growing old is: the aging can be integrated rather than excluded from society and there are processes and mechanisms by which many of the aging do just that — we can assist older people, by preparing them for places that already exist rather than inventing new roles for them. The social problem of growing old should be, if not solved, at least reduced in much the same way as have been economic and health problems. We have been so caught up by social and technological change that no time is available to salvage what may be the good of a particular thing — our policy for change, in a few words,

[7] Ernest W. Burgess. *Aging in Western Societies.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) pp. 20-21.

has been: replace the old with the new. We replace old machines with new machines, old men with young men, and are about to replace the old society with a new society. This policy has resulted in our wanting to create new roles for the elderly rather than preparing them for existing (old) but different roles in our society.

The challenging problem, in my opinion, is the analysis of the role structure of our society and the imaginative utilization and preparation of older people to play the roles which will be needed in our future service-oriented society. The important questions posed by this statement of the problem for the planning of programs and services for the elderly are:

(1) What are the ways (roles) in which older people may assume responsibility at the policy and/or action levels of the community?

(2) What are the ways (programs) in which older people may be encouraged and prepared for one of the needed roles in society?

A number of the elderly will assume responsibility for making policy which will direct efforts to improve the conditions under which older people will live during the latter years of life. But the greatest number of older people could have a social place in social agencies — that is, employment as paid volunteers. Social agencies, however, offer limited openings for voluntary efforts by the elderly and many do not know or have minimal skills and knowledge. The community center for the aging could, during the future, provide the programs and facilities with which the aging may make use of their talents by preparing themselves for a place in society. "The multi-purpose center for the aging," write Morris, *et al.*, "seems to provide the most encouraging environment . . . a cooperative organization directed primarily by the elderly and, perhaps, even run by either retired or older professionals, (remaining) flexible and (responding) to . . . varied and changing situations." A center of this kind could be the mechanism to receive and refer requests for help, offers of service, and act as a clearing house for these requests and offers, and a means of preparing older people by programs of adult education. Briefly, the future of the aging is promising. What Ollie Randall calls the "new breed" of older people will have more to say about the society in which they live and will demand services which they can use to begin new and constructive as well as personally satisfying careers.

FOCUSING ON THE INDIVIDUAL

Leo Laks

Whether or not we focus on the individual senior citizen is to a large extent influenced by certain feelings and attitudes. Among these is our understanding of the purposes and goals of the centers and clubs in which we work; our feelings about our own roles as practitioners and our attitudes toward "growing older." Let us examine some of these factors before we consider the values of individualization and the techniques of achieving such an approach.

When a worker comes across certain situations — for example, a member who is constantly sitting off by himself or several members in a conflict situation — he may hesitate to become involved because he feels that he doesn't have the right to "intrude" on a member's privacy. He may see his job assignment as limited to providing mass activities and letting the participants find their own way. Or perhaps, as a younger person, he may feel inadequate in dealing with people who are so much older. If he is guided by such feelings, then it is unlikely that he will care or dare to focus on the individual. The degree to which the practitioner is clear about his responsibilities as part of a helping profession will determine his desire to know more about each senior citizen and to gear programs to meet individual expressed and unexpressed needs.

When activities such as crafts, dramatics, puppetry, and music are imposed on the membership primarily to serve as an outlet for the group leader; or when such activities are selected so as to make a good impression on "others" there is no need to be concerned with the individual member. However, when activities serve as a tool to achieve other ends, "to provide older people with socially enriching experiences which help to preserve their dignity as human beings and enhance their feelings of self worth,"[1] then individualization becomes necessary and meaningful.

If we believe that as a natural process of aging, our members are progressively withdrawing from life around them, then all we should be required to do is stand by and watch life's denouement. However, if man's seeming "disengagement" is due to lack of opportunities to

[1] U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Administration on Aging and the National Council on Aging. *National Directory of Senior Centers.* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966).

become "engaged" in our social organization, then focusing on the individual is necessary in order to help create and maintain opportunities for continuing growth and development.

Centers and clubs may limit their program offerings to recreation, education, social activities or any combination of these. But the older adults who come to join bring their total personalities. They turn to the center staff when they are confronted with problems of health, employment, housing, family relations, etc. In order to render even the most minimal service in this area it is necessary to provide for individualization.

On occasion a senior citizen may join a center and, on his own initiative, engage in a given activity — for example, volunteer his time in a local hospital. Under these conditions the Center has a member who *happens* to volunteer his time in the Community. It does not have a *program* of opportunities for volunteer services and should not delude itself that it does. A professional approach to programming involves a conscious, deliberate plan based on an evaluation of known circumstances and conditions and which is introduced to bring about specific outcomes and is followed by an evaluation of the observed results. Such a program is based on the availability of knowledge which can come only from an individualized approach.

Focusing on the individual requires an investment of time — time for interviewing, recording, analysing, planning, and evaluating. However, this investment is sure to have several significant results. It will most certainly uncover additional manpower from the members to help in the operation of the center; enrich the program; serve as a stimulant for updating the worker's knowledge of community resources, thus increasing his value as a professional; and bring to light those gaps in the community's services to the aging with which staff, boards, and members should concern themselves.

When we have an adequate amount of information about older adults' backgrounds and interests we may find some among them who have the skills and personalities necessary to serve as member-leaders. Some of the best teachers of skills (painting, handcrafts, dancing, etc.) in centers are members whose abilities were discovered by the professional staff and who were subsequently encouraged to teach their peers. Other members have helped to assume responsibilities as discussion leaders, administrative assistants, receptionists, and office workers. In the long run, it takes fewer hours to train and supervise a staff of member-leaders than to carry out the direct service for which these members are being trained.

An atmosphere which demonstrates concern for the individual encourages members to seek information when they are confronted with problems of daily living. These requests stimulate the worker to learn about the agencies in his community to which members may turn for help. As the staff compiles such information and establishes a working relationship with these agencies it becomes increasingly easier to make future referrals. A corollary to this involvement is the discovery of what *is not* available to the older adult. This information, when properly documented and brought to the attention of the center's board of directors, the membership, and responsible community leaders, may serve as the basis of an exciting social action program which could benefit the entire community.

In some instances, getting to know the members' families has led to the development of inter-generational programs[2] where groups of senior citizens, as parents, their adult children, and even the grandchildren attempted to reach better understanding among themselves at seminars set up especially for this purpose.

Information about members' health needs has resulted in special, as well as ongoing health maintenance programs, including diagnostic testing for glaucoma, diabetes, cancer, tuberculosis, and hearing.

As we gather these data about our senior citizens we are helping in the quest for facts about older people which will eventually displace the stereotyped impressions about aging still prevalent in our society.

All center and club programs are group oriented. Our interest in "focusing on the individual" therefore refers to the individual *as a member of the group* and not as a client as, for example, the client of a social case worker. Many opportunities for individualization will present themselves to those who are convinced of the desirability of such a course and who are "tuned in" to the dynamic interchange that is taking place in the group life of the membership. The following techniques have been successfully employed in various centers and are presented as suggestions. The order in which they are listed does not imply any value differential. They may be adopted or adapted, singly or in any combination and may even suggest other techniques not included.

Receptionist and Lounge Worker: Someone assigned to greet and welcome everyone who comes to the center; to introduce new members

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[2] [illegible]. *Spanning the Generations.* (New York: National Council of Jewish Women, 1960).

and visitors to other individuals and activities; and to serve as an easily accessible resource for information.

Intake: A process through which each potential member has an opportunity to meet personally with a trained, qualified staff member to talk about his own interest in coming to the center and to learn what the center has to offer. Depending on the qualifications and professional sophistication of the interviewer, this process may take place during one or more formal or informal interviews. The minimal information to be recorded for each member should include his name; address; telephone number; family physician; whom to call in case of emergency; physical limitations, and whether member carries special medication to be taken in case of sudden illness. The responsibility of the center to respect the confidentiality of certain information offered by the member cannot be overstressed.

Newsletter: Through the medium of a periodic publication thumbnail sketches can introduce new members (rather than a mere list of names). Individual members who contribute to the welfare of the center can be recognized in various ways — news stories, committee reports, profiles, etc.

Group Orientation: Shortly after they join the center, new members meet as a group with representatives of staff and member leadership. This gives them an opportunity to meet other new members and to share and evaluate their experiences at the center as a group.

Presentation to Membership: New members are officially introduced to the general membership at the latter's regular meetings. At such meetings officers, committee chairmen, and others also have an opportunity to present themselves as individuals.

Counseling and Referral: A service through which members may present and get individual help for personal problems.

Program Aides: Selected and trained staff who are assigned to work with individual members who are finding it difficult to relate to the program. The program aide serves as a bridge between the member and the group.

Birthday Celebration: A mass program which, if properly organized, affords an opportunity for attention to focus on the individual celebrants (mailing individual birthday cards to the home; inviting the children and grandchildren to attend; calling upon each by name and giving him a chance to say something on occasion).

Small Group Activities: Regularly scheduled, ongoing meetings of groups from perhaps 10 to 30 members pursuing a common interest where participants have a chance to express themselves, plan together, carry out responsibilities and thus get to know each other as individuals.

Leadership: A self-government structure offers many opportunities for members to serve as peer leaders. Those who demonstrate that they have the skill and personality for the job, may be selected and trained to serve as staff assistants (in clerical, program, and administrative areas) or as "member-leaders," teaching skills or leading various groups.

Exhibits and Performances: These programs, which are presented to the center membership as well as to audiences outside the center, can highlight the contributions of the individual participants, rather than the anonymous group as a whole (listing names in a printed program for the event; distribution of individual citations and awards etc.).

Community Service: Projects in which members may give volunteer service to health, welfare, and educational agencies in the community. These activities which take place within and outside the center recognize individual abilities and achievement.

Sunshine Committee: A membership committee which takes an active interest in each individual who does not attend the program because of illness. Contact with such members is maintained through correspondence, telephone, and friendly visits to the home of the member or the institutional facility where he may be receiving treatment.

Service to Homebound: A program which extends beyond the work of the Sunshine Committee. In addition to friendly visits, special services to the homebound are provided — shopping, teaching a handcraft, bringing library books or phono-records, etc.

Publicity: Releases to newspapers, radio, and TV as well as neighborhood exhibits which include an identification of and focus on the participation of individual members.

Program Planning: The inclusion of center members in the decision-making process of planning program.

Annual Registration: An annual interview with each member at which time the individual can express what he liked and what he did not

like in the center during the preceding year. The annual registration also makes it possible to update the information recorded at the time of initial intake.

Dropout Survey: Each member who does not reregister is contacted by phone and or through correspondence to ascertain why he did not come back to the center. This, along with the previous technique, serves as one of several bases for an annual evaluation of the total center program.

In conclusion I would like to comment on the reality of staff, space, and budget limitations. Most of the club programs which serve older people in New York State today operate with inadequate facilities. They have a very limited and precarious financial structure; are open only a few hours during the week and are staffed by one part-time worker. It is understandable that those of you who are here from such clubs may wonder about the value of listening to the achievements of the large multi-service centers at this Institute. I submit that there are a number of values to be gained in this sharing of information. It is important to be aware of the potentialities for the transitional growth from a club to a center. Many of the presently established centers began as one-afternoon-a-week clubs. Further, as we gain insight into what should be our goals and purposes, we can begin to look for ways of adopting some of the techniques being presented in these more limited settings. Finally, it is hoped that members of the professional staffs will take the initiative and give leadership in social action programs which will bring about the indicated changes so that every community has adequate resources for its older population.

PART III

WORKSHOPS

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

A workshop session followed each of the three basic presentations — "A New Social Role for the Elderly," by Stephen J. Miller; "The Group Work Method in Clubs and Centers for Older Persons," by Rose Dobrof; and "Focusing on the Individual," by Leo Lake. An attempt was made to group the workshops as homogeneously as possible, that is in groups for multi-service centers, single purpose centers, and club programs.

Workshops were instructed to relate the discussions to the ideas presented in each of the three presentations, searching out implications for program development. Six workshops met concurrently.

Although there were some differences of focus in the groups, there appeared to be a striking similarity in points of agreement and disagreement as to basic concepts, principles, and practice. This high degree of similarity of conclusions reached by the different groups seems to justify the belief on the part of the seminar planners that certain fundamental purposes and goals are intrinsic to all types of group programs for older persons.

A New Social Role for the Elderly

There was distinct agreement in all of the workshops with the belief that older people will want to have less done for them and the opportunity to do more for themselves and for the community. In most of today's programs there is marked evidence of this attitude on the part of the older adult in contrast to a decade or more ago, that is, a greater willingness and ability to accept various forms of responsibility for the program. This clearly is a rejection of "tight control" by staff or a "superimposed" program without consideration given to the thinking and abilities expressed by the members.

There was, however, a general rejection of the premise that in time programs might be directed by the members themselves, because it was believed that most agencies supporting such programs recognize the need for technical knowledge as well as the human relations skills necessary for achieving the goals of these programs. Age should not be the primary consideration for staffing center programs any more than it is for most other professional roles.

In response to the question of whether existing programs made adequate provision for members to participate in planning and policy-making, there was general agreement that in the better programs mem-

bers are given every encouragement to assist in planning. This, in fact, is one area in which all leaders look for help from members (through program and other committees, officers, special interest groups, etc.). As for policymaking, the discussants agreed that members should be helped to understand the distinction between policy regarding programming, for which members should have a high degree of responsibility, and administrative policy, which is the responsibility of the sponsoring agency. Here, however, they stressed the need for maintaining a structure whereby the attitude and thinking of members relating to administrative policy can be fed back to boards and sponsoring agencies.

The discussants concurred that there is increasing evidence that older people do not want to "disengage" until physical change necessitates; rather, they desire to continue to be involved. The workshops see this as a challenge to the leadership. Fostering greater involvement in the community, and working toward a greater use of older persons in community planning and action, and a wider use of older persons in key roles in community organizations, including policymaking roles. It was the expressed belief that those older persons who now sit on policymaking boards are, for the most part, professional persons who were similarly involved earlier in life. In contrast to the situation which prevailed a decade or more ago, members of senior citizens groups today are more highly motivated, and, therefore, programs ought to provide the kinds of experiences that would prepare them for roles of increased responsibility in the community.

A few groups expressed the feeling that existing programs are, in fact, serving as a deterrent to "disengagement" and that most persons participating in such programs are consciously searching for ways in which they can continue to be engaged either through social relationships, through continuing education, or through leadership roles within the group and the community. There was a belief that the existing programs are, in fact, helping to change the character of the subculture of the aging from negative to positive, and helping to integrate the older person within the total community.

There was agreement that we are only beginning to scratch the surface, and that further community education needs to be done in order to bring about wider use of the skills of older persons in community service.

The concept of payment for volunteer service was largely rejected by the workshop discussants, who thought that getting paid would

deprive the older person of one of the greatest satisfactions of later life, that is, an opportunity to contribute to the common good. The comment was made in some of the workshops that often men in the existing programs who have been job-oriented all their lives, consider unremunerated volunteer work as being without purpose. These people prefer not to get involved in such effort. This, however, does not seem to reflect the general attitude of persons coming to club and center programs.

There was agreement as to the necessity of educating agencies that are the recipients of volunteer service to recognize the value of reimbursing volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses. This, it was agreed, would result in stimulating more retirees to become interested in community service.

In considering the aging to be members of a subculture, the discussants felt strongly that group programs should be sensitive to the need for developing the kinds of programs that will help to reduce social loss and give the older person an added sense of worth by allowing engagment in activities which are generally enjoyed by adults regardless of age, rather than some of the existing activities that foster a childish image.

There was recognition of the need to do more in program planning that would help to relate older persons to the forces now operating that make for progress and change, such as contemporary social problem. This could be done in group discussions and projects dealing with current social issues and community problems.

The Group Method in Clubs and Centers

The workshops attempted to identify the kinds of men and women who, for the most part, are participating in club and center programs and persons who do not. There was agreement that many retired persons have no need for a group program; however, many who clearly could benefit are not being reached, including persons in nursing homes, homes for the aged, the homebound, ill, and handicapped. Some of the workshops concerned themselves with ways of serving such persons.

There was discussion on the extent to which centers are helping to provide a way of life for those who participate. For some it is a "home away from home." For others, the club or center presents an opportunity for participating in a specific type of adult education, an in-

formal group activity, or some other specific service. Not all persons should be expected to become deeply involved in the total program.

The workshop readily accepted the principle that a conscious effort must be made to see that each member gets what he wants or needs from the program. If, however, the club or center is to play a meaningful role, it is necessary for the leader/director to really get to know each individual, his values and his expectations in coming to the program.

The workshop also recognized the necessity for followup of persons who fail to return after one or more visits. This is seldom done, and it is a job which could be handled effectively by member volunteers.

There was a question in some of the groups as to the need for distinguishing between the two generations of older persons now participating in programs, that is, the 60–80 and those over 80. Most seemed to feel that a single diversified program could serve the needs of both age groups although in some instances an attempt is being made to "group" within the group by age (such as the Four Score Club). Leaders must, however, have an understanding of physiological and psychological differences; and programs should be broad enough to accommodate a wide age span.

Focusing on the Individual

The workshops readily agreed that if each member is to be helped to have a meaningful role within the program, individual needs are as important as group needs. The importance of the initial interview was stressed, but there was general agreement that this is not being handled as effectively as it should be. Most groups seemed to believe that an in-depth intake procedure might be resented by many persons coming to a community-based program and might, in fact, turn them away from the program. Ways were suggested for getting basic information during subsequent contacts; maintaining a file or dossier on each member was suggested as a practice, with most of the information freely supplied by the member himself, including a photograph, and family information (children, grandchildren, etc.). A few workshops demonstrated the initial interview through role playing.

There appeared to be agreement that more time could be given to interviewing and recording member interests and needs with the help of nonmember volunteers. The importance of confidentiality was stressed, which would rule out the use of member leaders for recording and maintaining membership data.

All workshops stressed the need for greater imagination and ingenuity in discovering ways in which the abilities of members could be used more effectively within the program (through committees, program aides, publicity, program planning, hostessing, etc.) as well as through roles in the community. It was agreed that greater recognition should be given to member volunteers for performing outstanding service.

Some of the workshop participants thought that more should be done for members in providing health and medical service referrals, as well as bringing the services of health agencies into the program. Most of the groups agreed that ideally a club and center program should serve as a bridge for achieving greater involvement by the individual in the educational, cultural, and civic life of the community.

PART IV

PROGRAM SKILLS DEMONSTRATIONS

FOLK AND SQUARE DANCING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Melville F. Daue

The brief session devoted to folk and square dancing was originally intended to serve as an "icebreaking" session for those attending the seminar. Following the suggestion of the planning committee, it was decided to present material which could be integrated in programs in clubs and centers for older persons.

After a brief instruction period seminar, participants were invited to dance. Following each dance a short discussion took place, with suggestions given as to teaching techniques and procedures which are advisable in adapting and, in some cases, simplifying the dances for the elderly.

The importance of a good music amplifying system with variable speed control for slowing the tempo was stressed. Experience also pointed up the desirability of featuring the circle dance, wherever possible, to encourage self-confidence and sociability.

Stressed also was the need to keep the dances simple, particularly in the beginning, until the necessary technical skill and confidence has been built up in the group. After several sessions the dancing can be advanced to include folk and square dances of more moderate difficulty.

Dance demonstrations included such numbers as: "Greensleeves," "Patty Cake Polka," and "Alley Cat."

MUSIC FOR SENIOR CITIZEN GROUPS

Evelyn Bayliss

Music is a language which is readily understood by all. To what extent one wishes to become involved in understanding is a matter of individual choice. Senior citizens, many of whom may have had little or no opportunity for listening to or participating in music activities, should be offered such opportunities through center and club programs.

To begin on a level easily comprehended by everyone, group singing for the purpose of recreation is a very pleasurable and beneficial experience. This is true whether the quality of the singing is fine or only mediocre. *Participation* is the important thing.

In a large group meeting, the opening may be the simple singing of a song such as "America" accompanied by someone at the piano. This beginning can open the way for the introduction of a few more favorites. Songs may be included at dinner or other programs where large groups attend. Often "action" songs can be used, some with hand gestures, such as, "Down By The Old Mill Stream"; some with movement such as, marching to a song like "Marching Through Georgia"; or some with rhythms, such as clapping hands or tapping feet to a tune like "Deep In The Heart Of Texas." All of these song types tend, hopefully, to create some interest in music.

After such singing has been introduced to the larger number of members, a center or club director should then arrange for special interest groups in music as well as singing of old time favorites, sacred music, seasonal songs (Thanksgiving, Christmas), humorous songs, popular and classical songs.

Rhythm bands with either bona fide or miniature instruments provide enjoyment. Learning to play such instruments as the autoharp or the flutophone provide an agreeable experience in music study. The group may be encouraged to present a simple pageant or musical, with costumes and staging.

Music accompanies both round and square dancing. This can be a popular program which is healthy and satisfying. The fellowship of the group, the stimulation of the exchange of partners, the actual dancing, and the conversation all set to rhythmic music, make an enjoyable situation with a "come again" feeling.

From the larger group who desire music mainly for recreation, a smaller group of mixed voices may be organized and may develop into a choral group, or perhaps, a choir. Such a group may be trained to sing more difficult music.

From this group of singers, a number of people may be stimulated to better appreciate and understand music. Thus, a group of intensely interest people may develop.

PHYSICAL FITNESS IN A SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER

Frances Bauman

Within the past few years much has been heard of the words "physical fitness." It was President Kennedy who gave impetus to this term when he spoke of the lack of our physical fitness on a national scale.

Schools, institutions, and recreational centers embarked on an accelerated program to rectify this defect in our nation's musculature. In their haste some programs may have stressed developing "Tarzanesque" specimens rather than the development of good healthy bodies.

But the term "physical fitness" should not be confined to the young or middle aged. It is a term which can and should encompass older persons as well. It is, in fact, this age group, (because of their abundance of leisure) which is able to pursue new and varied skills and learning experiences which can be offered in senior citizens' programs.

The Great Neck Senior Citizens Center provides a rich and diversified program of activities, including a class in Senior Fitness. This course was designed as an opportunity for participants to gain more confidence in body control, and to retain elasticity of joints. It stresses the need for greater mobility, which participants are still capable of maintaining at their age, while using a minimal amount of energy.

The basis for this activity stems from the modern dance, which provides exercise through balanced relaxation and tension of muscles. The technique is built upon the natural ability of the body to exaggerate, stylize, and thus improve the existing muscle tone.

Work is started on chairs (metal folding chairs, preferably, since they are most accessible), and participants start to "breathe" from a relaxed position. The head is bowed, the back rounded, taking on the slight contour of the chair, and the hands are placed on the thighs, almost creating a general mood of contemplation.

With a rhythmic musical beat in the background, (popular tunes perhaps), the body starts to "breathe." Movements have been designed to stretch, bend, tilt, and flex all the head, neck, chest, and leg muscles.

After repetition of these movements, there is always a return to the period of relaxation, which is an integral part of the program. Following about 20 minutes of this basic movement, the group rises gently from the chairs, and, using the chairs as bars, continue to do exercises which are basic to good dance technique.

Then we teach dance figures in modified form, which give them a feeling of freedom of movement in space and completion of dance steps.

Thus, we utilize three different levels of movement, *the chair* (which is used in lieu of the floor), *the standing position*, and *movement in space*, such as circle or line dances.

As members of the group begin to work in a harmonious unit, there is a tremendous sense of well-being and enjoyment as they realize, through participation, that their bodies can respond to direction and they can readily see progress in their newly acquired physical attitudes.

Also, as the group becomes more cohesive, each person begins to lose his self-consciousness and sometimes spontaneously relates to the group his love of dance, or sometimes, prohibitions retained from old world cultures. Much can be learned about the various backgrounds of the students through their attitudes toward dancing.

Within our class we had a man with a prolonged history of angina pectoris who had permission to engage in a portion of our program. He has emerged enthusiastic about the value of exercise in relation to his physical limitations, and claims that he has derived many benefits, maintaining a general state of good health as a result of participation in the activity. As Dr. Paul Dudley White has said, "It is better for the arteries to wear out than to rust out."

The idea of exercise derived from the dance is not startlingly new, but its adaption to the advanced years of the participants, gives this class an excitement and vitality which cannot be matched in groups of younger people.

We of the Great Neck Senior Center heartily agree with Margaret Mead's statement that "It is utterly false and arbitrary to put all the learning into childhood, all the work into middle age, and all the regrets into old age."

Men and women who are fortunate enough to live in an area where there are senior day centers and who can participate in a program which makes "their home away from home" an enriching experience, are able to ward off proverbial "old age." These elder citizens are constantly reevaluating and learning new skills such as this form of physical activity, which had been written off as impossible.

It is this creative "relearning" process, designed with the realistic limitations of the advancing years, that can be instrumental in making the days and years ahead exhilarating, vigorous, and rewarding.

MARIONETTES . . . A NEW KIND OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Barbara Jamieson and Elizabeth Crum

Want something new for your Senior Citizens? A service project that will bring them out into the Community, into schools, hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, with a gift that will bring joy and laughter? Try Marionettes!

Membership Involvement:

- The marionettes themselves must be made, dressed and strung
- The controls must be made, to specifications, one for each marionette
- Plays or skits must be written
- Records and record player must be kept ready
- Props and electrical equipment must be checked and kept in good repair
- Stage must be constructed
- Back drops and scenery must be painted
- Stage Operation . . . setting it up . . . curtains . . . lights
- Bookings must be made
- People with special needs: the blind, the handicapped, etc., must be considered
- Discussions of situations portrayed in plays can be planned

Community Involvement:

- Performances at Public Library to commemorate holidays, Library Week, Senior Citizen Month
- Performances at Nursery Schools
- Performances at Public Schools
- Performances at Nursing Homes
- Performances for Handicapped Children
- Performances at Operation Headstart School

For centuries, young folk and old have succumbed to the fascination of the gifted "little people." Detailed instructions[1] that are available

[1] Edith Flack Ackley, *Marionettes: Easy to Make, Fun to Use!* (New York, Lippincott, 1929).

for making and operating marionettes make this ancient art a possibility for programming in any senior citizen program. As the foregoing list suggests, a marionette workshop has the potential for involving many interest groups and can bring your members into many rewarding community situations.

Don't expect to launch a full-fledged "performing company" in a few meetings. This is a long-term, open-end project. First, enthusiasm must be engendered. Make a marionette yourself (in private) and when you have succeeded in making him perform to a gay tune, show him off. The rest is easy. It is well to have the person who makes the marionette become the operator. These "little fellows" have great personality and a rapport develops between the maker and his creation.

Eventually you will surely be building a puppet stage,[2] but one can manage very satisfactorily on a card table in a doorway, with a simple curtain for concealing the operators.

Now take a giant step. Have your puppeteers make up some skits around a social situation and use them as a springboard for a discussion. The possibilities are endless . . . . . do explore them!

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[2]op. cit.

MEETING READING NEEDS IN A SENIOR CITIZEN CLUB

(A TNT Plea for the Disadvantaged Book Lover)

Estelle Noon

That a short article[1] printed in a local library journal should, like a stone, set in far rippling circles to become the occasion of my presence here, as a librarian, is an indication that there aren't enough workers in what some of us feel is a fertile field. It is my hope, and doubtless yours, that in this workshop we may share enthusiasm and ideas for developing various types of book programs to meet the needs (I might even say the "yearnings") of what may be only a small portion of our larger senior citizen groups. This exchange will, I trust, result in the provision of more reading and discussion opportunities for our senior groups, regardless of the problems involved.

Some of these problems are already the concern of librarians throughout the State. Librarians in charge of adult services to the community are well equipped to assist in developing book and discussion groups in senior citizen programs. If, then, you haven't started a book discussion group and want to, the first step is to call on your local library.

That is how the reading group in Westbury got started. The director of the Westbury Senior Citizens asked for service from the public library. On her departure, years later, she wrote that the book group was one of the projects of which she was most proud.

The beginning and development of our first years have been printed in a pamphlet, "The Library and the Senior Citizen." I sometimes fear it sounds too easy, too hopeful — like those inspiring articles I used to read when I taught high school. Such a glow I used to feel, so inspired! Experience has taught me, however, not to expect my classes to produce the same glowing results in the same way. The important thing about such articles, and a workshop such as this, is the *fire* one catches — a fire which may take a different direction yet give off its own brightness as one develops ideas and methods of one's own for each group.

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[1] E. Noon and W. F. Lalli. "The Library and the Senior Citizen." *Odds and Ends.* (Fall issue, 1962; Nassau County Library Association.)

And so, after one has caught the fire, or has the spark, already glowing within, what to do? Consult your library. And certainly here, together, we can consider the materials available to our use and consider how to adapt them to our needs. After that? Perhaps this is the time to continue telling what has been and is going on in our book group, as I like to call this small section of the larger very active group of Westbury Senior Citizens.

As a member of the Westbury Library staff, it is still part of my work to furnish weekly library service to all members of the entire club. So with the aid of an 83-year-old club member I trundle a cart of books intended to fill the general requests of all who may want book service. Almost weekly a bright-eyed octogenarian of the painting class expresses thanks for a picture of Lillian Russell our library director searched out for her to copy. (It seems in her youth she made a dress for Lillian Russell, the then reigning beauty!) The general service thus started has resulted in some of the more able-bodied members being given membership cards to make their own selections at the public library.

Back now to our main theme, the special one of book discussion groups. Ours has taken a different direction and form from that envisioned in 1962. Certainly in a report on how many participate regularly, the numbers are not impressive. Yet this steady, faithful little group that hates to miss a book day, is eager for others to share its experience, the value of which could never make a showing on a statistical report.

Before going further, it seems advisable to speak of some of the special problems which need to be considered by a senior citizens leader who wishes to foster a meaningful book discussion group, large or small. Interesting people make interesting *older* people, which brings us to the conflict of interest problems. Some are interested in so many things, and so we have the time and schedule conflicts, particularly in noncenter programs. It's hard for the painting enthusiast to drop her brush in favor of a book, and for the pianist, badly needed for the singing group, to stop for the book hour. But they do! And let's not forget that these persons of varied interests may be the very ones most needed as officers and leaders for larger groups. How are we to balance these varied interests without creating frustration or running the risk of making what would be the calmer years tense, over-busy, and go-go! Attention must be paid to programming that includes the needs of the book lover.

One real problem of our book group has been to find a quiet place where sharing the reading experience of the week, reading aloud, listening, talking, laughing, sharing a deep comradeship, having a brief weekly hour of quiet enjoyment is not interrupted or hampered by noise from the outside unless all windows are closed (for our senior citizens activities at present are carried on in a recreation center not designed to muffle noise in any part). Yet, despite handicaps, we have persisted; for, when offered an ideal place in the then adjacent library, the book group voted against it because it would involve separation from the larger organization, might lose prospective members, hurt the irregular participant, or even set the reading group off as "intellectuals"—that bane of our society!

For other reasons quiet and suitable surroundings are important, and here we come to the real heart of the matter, the values which can't show up in reports. Hearing difficulties, failing eyesight, even blindness, have been no barrier to member participation in a small book group. Members have also found friendship as well as mental stimulation. The handicapped can be a stimulus. For example, I have used deafness as an aid to overcome the self-consciousness of the timid member merely by suggesting she talk louder and look directly at Mr. X instead of the leader.

And now some information on the books themselves. What to use? How to use them? What methods work best for groups of twenty, what for smaller groups? Of course these matters depend on the nature of the group, their aims in coming together. It seems difficult, and to me, not desirable to expect long-term, rigid plans to work. Expected irregularities of attendance and obvious physical handicaps forbid it. Simple procedures and a feeling of informality are best. This does not mean the content and worth of the interchange need be shallow. Quite the reverse. The simple device, for example, of just suggesting that in reporting on a book the member read a significant, humorous, or philosophical passage typical of the book, can lead to the most worthwhile exchange of ideas and provide the leader with unexpected opportunity for new book suggestions.

Perhaps some of our recent procedures might illustrate some values of the informal approach. National and religious holidays furnish good opportunities for brief readings and exchange of views on what these days mean to all. The coronation of Pope Paul VI and his visit to this country set some to reading West's *Shoes of the Fisherman*, the discussion providing a chance for one of our members who has to use

talking books to report on the recorded biography of Pope John XXIII. Lincoln's birthday led to the reading and discussion of Lincoln's noble *Second Inaugural*. Washington's birthday led to reading parts from his *Farewell Address*, followed by a discussion on our relationship to other countries and the dangers of sectionalism. The question of race relations is ever cropping up, with enlightenment and love shed by an elderly, scholarly, Negro member.[1] Our proximity to Theodore Roosevelt's home added interest to such books as *The Roosevelts of Sagamore Hill*. A program on Walt Whitman, whose birthplace is on Long Island met with less success, perhaps because it was too carefully planned or too close to the heart of the leader! The Kipling centennial turned us to India again, to discussing *Kim*, some of the poems, and to oral reading of his touching short story, *Without Benefit of Clergy*.

Oral reading is proving most enjoyable, and lately most of the book hour has been devoted to one book, an autobiography by Younghill Kang a native Korean. Written in 1931 (now out of print)—*The Grass Roof* is a charming, humorous, beautiful, and wise book. We laughed over his crazy poet uncle and the complications of their family life, paused to ponder on a wise or beautiful passage. Once the surprised inquiry, "But I didn't think Buddhists had temples" gave a chance for research and a brief report at the next meeting. On reading further, the group became deeply affected by the bitter and brutal experiences as the Japanese conquerors moved in. So, too, Pearl Buck's *The Living Reed* presents the history and plight of the Koreans, a book previously discussed. And so we are led to Vietnam, for the parallels between the two countries are many, and we better understand the tragic problems of the peoples of Asia without an intensive study of foreign policy. Current events discussion is always being injected.

Does this seem too serious for senior citizens groups? Not to us it doesn't! We combine discussion with humor, but, more important, is the sense they have of learning and growing.

One of our best read members said, "I read now with greater attention and get more." It was the 83-year-old Negro and a German lady who conducted a discussion on Thoreau's *Walden* while the discussion leader was on vacation. An illustration, isn't it, of leadership potential which we should tap more than we do!

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[1] This person shared the fact that his membership in the senior citizens group has been his first experience in feeling a *real part* of an integrated group.

A brief profile of a few members who have been regular participants in the book discussion group might show what a reading program can mean in human terms. The club director asked that the discussion group present a panel discussion for the entire club membership. This seemed, at first, a formidable task to these seventy and eighty year olds but they welcomed the opportunity and chose for their demonstration a well-loved book they had all read, Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*, based on the life of Buddha. Just planning what part each should discuss brought out fine qualities of thoughtfulness and appreciation of each other's powers. They acquitted themselves well, but I think the entire group was proud to see the panel written up in the *Senior Citizens Nassau County Gazette*, under library activity.

CURRENT EVENTS DISCUSSION GROUP

Sylvia Bernstein

As a teacher of Fundamental Adult Education for New York City public schools, I have conducted English classes in senior citizen centers for many years. I have found that my students were always very much aware of the world around them and were eager to read and discuss all kinds of news — political, social, scientific, and cultural. While their interest in news concerning their own immediate needs, such as Medicare, housing, health, and consumer problems was great, they also showed a strong desire to learn about our fast changing world. In what better way can people of all ages stay in the mainstream of life, than by keeping up with the news?

At all points in life there is need for self-expression and communication. For the person who has retired from employment, or who no longer takes care of a family, there must be some place where he can exchange ideas with others about issues of importance. Participation in a current events group can provide for this need. As part of a group, he obtains knowledge which can give him a feeling of confidence and self-respect.

The group leader must know member needs — both as members of a group and as individuals. He must start from where the members are. He must know what their interests are, what they like to read, watch on television, listen to on the radio. The interests will be varied, but they will usually fall into a few well-defined groups. The rich backgrounds of the members should be utilized and each person may then become a "specialist" in the area in which he is most interested.

The group leader should always be well prepared on the topic under discussion. It would be advisable for the group to set up a calendar of events for a specific period — say for a month — during which time participants responsible for each session may make adequate preparation. Outside speakers may be invited to participate, where this seems necessary or feasible. The group leader can gather materials (pictures, filmstrips, films, articles from newspapers, etc.) to stimulate the discussion. Members of the group can be on the alert for special articles, television and radio programs relating to the topic.

The group leader should, however, provide flexibility within the program. When special events occur, members should be encouraged to discuss such events while they are current and lively. If a subject

is of great interest, a future meeting should be planned for fuller discussion of the topic.

Maximum effort should be made to develop leadership within the group. Some members may be very good at handling projectors; others may set up special folders to hold newspaper and magazine articles of special interest; some may send away for government pamphlets on topics of consumer interest; social security, etc.; some may collect pictures of interesting people, places, and events.

Strive for active participation on the part of all members of the group. Part of communication is listening. If the programs are of interest to participants they will listen *and* talk. They will have mutual respect for each other.

For good discussion, the group leader must develop techniques of questioning to start the ball rolling. With the use of a picture, or a filmstrip, and with "what, where, how, why" questions, a discussion can get under way. Then it should continue among the members themselves without too much interference from the leader. Encourage the members to ask each other's opinions. Differences of opinion are stimulating and the life blood of discussion. However, both the leaders and the members must be prepared with *facts* so that there is real discussion and not a free-for-all.

The group leader should judge the pace of the discussion. Don't allow overtaxing of the members' energy.

Suggested topics for discussion:

1. Local needs of center facility, transportation, recruitment of new members, etc.
2. Consumer problems; legislation
3. Social problems — changes in family patterns, delinquency, narcotics
4. Politics — local, national, international
5. Civil rights pioneering
6. Science — health advances, space flights
7. People and places in the news
8. Election forums — League of Women Voters, etc.
9. News events in music, the theatre, the arts, etc.
10. Topics of specific interest to senior citizens — housing, health, etc.

Suggested Visual Aids and Audio Aids:

1. Filmstrips (handviewer and projector). The use of the filmstrip projector for groups in current events is excellent as it can be paced according to needs of the participants. "The New York Times" and the "Journal American" have excellent filmstrips on current events. These provide for background material as well as the current news. The handviewer can be used to preview the filmstrips or for individual use of members of the group. They can decide which frames of the strip would be interesting or important to the discussion. The filmstrip has the advantage of being available when and where you want it; it is simple to operate; it is inexpensive; it can be used on various levels.
2. Films
3. Flat pictures from magazines, newspapers, libraries
4. Television — special reports, discussions, space flights, etc.
5. Radio — 5 minute news reports, special news reports
6. Maps and globes
7. Panel discussions and debates

Suggestea Reading Materials:

1. Newspapers
   a) straight news
   b) editorials } for critical reading
   c) columnists
   Use of several newspapers for different views on the same topic
2. Special school newspapers for current events
   "News For You" (for elementary readers)
   "Current Events"
   "World News"

Suggested Community Resources:

1. Speakers
2. Trips to places of interest
3. Library

Community Action

Participation in public meetings. Writing letters to elected representatives; to the press.

Every effective discussion must be based on the interests of the group. However, it remains the responsibility of the discussion leader to suggest topics which open the minds of the group to new thinking, new horizons, and which can result in a lifetime interest.

PART V

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

A PRIMARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

Ruth M. Ginzler

Picture a public school on one side of a street and a Senior Citizens Center on the opposite side. Last summer, the newly elected President of the PTA of the Post Road School of White Plains met with her counterpart, the newly elected President of the White Plains-Scarsdale Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, the organization which built and supports the senior citizen program of the Adult Community House. The idea, on one hand, of a corps of senior citizens — with time on their hands and love in their hearts — and, on the other hand, of available children as recipients, seemed pregnant with creative possibilities. This was the genesis of the "substitute grandparent" program.

From the files of our senior center, names were gleaned of members who had talent in one area or another. At the opening of school, a questionnaire was circulated asking who would be interested in attending one afternoon a week such activities as cooking, knitting, sewing, crocheting, woodworking, dancing, painting, ceramics, arts and crafts. Response was overwhelming from both groups. From the school some 300 answered. For the first cycle of 6 weeks, 66 children were accepted and divided into 10 groups. Subsequent cycles engaged 80 children and the number of activities reduced to 8. In all, we've had 3 complete groups of children led mostly by approximately 25 seniors.

The children range in age from 6 to 12 and represent a complete ethnic and economic cross section of White Plains. The "seniors" range in background from teachers, homemakers, executives, labor negotiator, artist; and in age from 60 to 80. The common denominator is ability to communicate. The projects were kept simple in order to complete them within the prescribed time. At the end of each 6 week period, we had a standing-room-only party for juniors, seniors, and guests.

They met Tuesday afternoons. The appointed time was supposed to be 3:15 p.m., but by 3 o'clock the children were already pouring in. Cookies were drowned in quickly-gulped milk and away they scooted to their varied activities. In one case, we enrolled a child who was considered "disturbed" by the school authorities. He started "hacking" around the first day, but the "senior" had the group under such control in her own gentle way that within minutes she had this young man

modelling clay and so absorbed in his creation that he gave it his undivided attention. He was an exemplary pupil in all his visits to the center and his behavior improved in his public school classes too.

The membership at our center, which is open all day Monday through Friday, is made up of a number of "doers" and this program has added another dimension to their lives. The Swiss lady (who sews for her church and yodels at all our parties) loved to teach her craft to her girls; the gentleman who is still a consultant in labor relations (and who led a Brownie troop when he was a grandfather) doubled as a woodworker and cook; the former commercial artist (who guides our own "seniors" in the art class) did the same for her young group creating at each session something of which they were proud. A remark by one of the children sums up their opinion —"better than homework and more fun."

Too often only sensational news is covered by the press. Fortunately for *The New York Times* (and us) they learned about our program, sent a perceptive newsman and photographer and launched us publicly. We have been reprinted in *The Christian Science Monitor*, have had our pictures taken for TV, *The London Times*, a General Motor's publication, interviewed on radio, and inquired about from *Reader's Digest*.

But the most rewarding response is from the parents of the children involved, such as the time I was buying art supplies from a local shop. When I gave the gentleman the name of the center (while asking for a discount), he immediately inquired whether we were going to continue the program because his children had attended and were very eager to return.

We all remember as some of our happiest moments, those times we spent with our grandparents. When we transmit some of this feeling to these children and, in turn, convey to the "seniors" how important a contribution they are making, we have accomplished a small miracle of mutual enrichment.

TRAINING FRIENDLY VISITORS

Hilda Ross

The Northern Westchester Senior Assembly's Friendly Visiting Program is a service designed to recruit, train, place and supervise volunteers who can visit shut-ins on a limited but regular basis. The program developed as a result of telephone requests into the Assembly's Information and Referral Service from people in the community, from agencies and from church groups who wanted "someone" to visit shut-ins. For sake of brevity, no attempt will be made to discuss the valuable psychological impact of this visitation on the shut-in who requests this kind of community contact. I shall limit the discussion to the training program.

All potential "visitors" are interviewed and screened by the Assembly's Executive Director. The bases for selection are: volunteer must have a warm, outgoing personality; must have a car; must have neat appearance; can accept direction and supervision; can work on regular but limited basis; takes genuine interest in the shut-in; and will commit himself to visiting one hour each week for a minimum of three months.

Duties of the Friendly Visitor include reading aloud, listening, teaching a craft when indicated, taking shut-in for a ride, doing simple errands, writing a letter, referring arising problems to Agency Director.

The training course is divided into two sections:

Section A: Four 2-hour training sessions given by professional personnel and paid by the Adult Education Department of the local school.

Section B (elective): An eight 2-hour craft course offered after the Friendly Visitor begins his first assignment with a shut-in. The craft course is presented by the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

If the Friendly Visitor is an older adult, he may be assigned to a younger shut-in. If the Friendly Visitor is middle aged, he *must* be assigned to an older shut-in. Either way the older person is involved.

The Assembly will train volunteers when it is established that the Assembly and participating agencies and community can absorb the trained people immediately. No time must elapse between the end of the first training session and placement with the agency.

The Assembly's Executive Director confers with the Department of Public Welfare, Public Health District Nurse, and the Westchester

Lighthouse about the visitors they are to receive. An appointment is established by the Assembly for the Visitor to relate to a particular person within an agency of his choice.

All shut-ins are visited by the Assembly Director to determine that it is a Friendly Visitor the shut-in really needs (not a housekeeper or practical nurse); to observe physical handicaps; to observe the living arrangement and, if with family, the atmosphere of the home; and, in fact, to appraise the picture so that a Friendly Visitor best suited to this shut-in can be assigned.

COURSE DESIGN

Section A

Session 1 A film "This Is My Friend" shows what Friendly Visitors are able to accomplish. Discussion follows. Leader: Assembly Director.

Session 2 Psychological Aspects of Aging. Understanding characteristics of the aged in view of their social, medical, and environmental changes over the years. Case histories presented. Leader: Psychologist.

Session 3 Sociological Aspects of Aging. Understanding the forces and pressures in the life of the shut-in which result in the environment in which the Visitor finally sees him, helping the Visitor understand the shut-in's present situation. We hope to help the Volunteer avoid excessive emotion involvement through understanding. Case histories presented. Leader: Social Worker. Types of disability commonly seen in the aged is presented by an Occupational Therapist. A craft best suited to a disability is discussed.

Session 4 Final Session. Relating to the Assembly or to the selected agency. Role of Friendly Visitor. Do's and don'ts for the Visitor. Assignment to an agency is confirmed. "Letter of Completion" awarded. Lunch and Coffee. Leader: Assembly Director.

Section B

After completing Section A and beginning the assignment, the Friendly Visitor may elect to take the Craft Course. If crafts produced by the shut-in are worthy of purchase, there is an outlet for the sale of same through Craftsmen Unlimited.

The Assembly believes that a Friendly Visitor who can also teach a craft, which might supplement the income of the shut-in, provides a valuable additional asset.

Followup For the Friendly Visitor

The Friendly Visitor relates to the Director of the Assembly or the Supervisor of the elected agency. Supervision of the Friendly Visitor is essential to a successful program, and only those agencies offering such supervision may request a Friendly Visitor.

The following procedure on the Friendly Visiting program is maintained by the Northern Westchester Senior Assembly:

1. The volunteer must report to the Assembly Director for consultation after each of the first two visits to the shut-in.
2. The volunteer reports in by telephone whenever needed thereafter.
3. At the end of the first 6 months all Friendly Visitors are invited to come back to the Assembly for sharing ideas and experiences This is done again at the end of the year.

The Assembly's Visiting Program is directed by an eight member committee representing the large geographical areas of Northern Westchester.

THE "DAILY HELLO"

Alfred M. Volpe

Guardianship and protective services are among the many needs of the elderly. To meet this need, the New Rochelle Recreation Commission and the Citizens Advisory Committee on the Aging have started a project entitled the "Daily Hello." The "Daily Hello" service is simply a safeguard checkup on senior citizens living alone. In reality, those seniors who are incapacitated or who have no one available or "able and willing" to take responsibility for them are called by a volunteer at a specified time during the day. The telephone call assures the elder citizen of some protection in the event of accident or injury in case he or she might not be able to reach the telephone. Should the person leave the home for the day or for an extended visit somewhere else, he simply notifies the volunteer.

A "Daily Hello" volunteer committee is probably advantageous in coordinating the telephone calls to the "senior," and rotation of different volunteers calling different "seniors" every month or so is highly desirable. The results can be remarkable insofar as different relationships can grow between the "senior" and the volunteer. Let me cite an example. A telephone call by a volunteer (although small as it might appear) can eliminate a part of the social breakdown of isolation and loneliness. Through the "Daily Hello," friendships are made and can grow. To quote one of the "seniors," "Someone does care."

The volunteer at a later stage might coordinate the service through the Recreation Department programs that are available for senior citizens, that is, invite the "senior" to the program. Thus the phone call has a lasting effect. In reality, followthrough has taken place from a simple conversation.

The "Daily Hello" can also result in "Friendly Visiting" whereby the shut-in can have companionship instead of loneliness.

In summary, the "Daily Hello" may achieve many results. The service can grow to become stimulating and enlightening on the part of the volunteers and the "seniors." The group of volunteers in the community might share a responsibility with other organizations in the planning and coordination of services for older people. The richer and more varied the resources in the community, the greater benefits and services our senior citizens enjoy.

PLANNING FOR SERVICES FOR THE AGED AT THE COUNTY LEVEL

Bernard Schwartzberg

(Summarization of paper prepared by Walter Boninger)

Leaders and directors of Golden Age Clubs and Centers for Older People are seen by their members not only as responsible for organizing recreational and social activities, but also as being able to help with personal problems, health, housing, family relationships, etc. The knowledge derived from this service puts leaders in a key position to assist in the planning and development of total services, whether such planning takes place within the center program, a local community, a county, or a larger geographical area.

In Nassau County, therefore, it was no accident that members of the Long Island Senior Citizens Directors Association were active on the standing Committee on Aging, which was part of the total community planning organization of the Health and Welfare Council of Nassau County. That committee was asked to look into the special needs of the aging in Nassau County, which were being overlooked in a period of rapid community population and service growth.

This committee came up with a recommendation for the creation of a Gerontological Center, which later came to be known as the Senior Center of Nassau County. This senior center was thought as a central hub from which could emanate a variety of services best administered and supplied by voluntary groups from a county level. It was viewed as a community institution which could and does draw together a wide variety of agencies, professionals, professional associations, governmental services, colleges, and community representatives, including those from the elderly group, to focus on the older person in Nassau County, and assist in planning more effectively to meet the needs of this population segment.

Thus, the senior center was started by an action committee of the Nassau County and Welfare Council, and is still operated by this Council. The board of directors of the council vested in a policy committee, the responsibility of determining and implementing policy for the center, subject to review and approval of the board. The policy committee, likewise, conducts much of its business through other com-

mittees, such as the health committee, the education committee, and the publicity committee.

The senior center relates directly to the community and community groups in many ways. The local chapter, No. 59, of the American Association of Retired People has taken on the responsibility for the area of employment, and provides volunteers for this service, with the professional assistance of the New York State Employment Service. Hofstra University's Center for Research on Aging will provide the research base for much of the center's later work.

The Long Island Senior Citizens Directors Association, which also meets at the center, has long been interested in improvement of club standards and conducts regular training sessions for leaders. It has been involved in the matter of securing lowered bus fares for the seniors.

Various community health agencies have been related to the work of the center. The Long Island Hearing and Speech Society has developed a program of hearing tests for this age group. The public health nurse at the center has been involved in an assessment of the health and medical needs of the older person. The Nassau County Extension Service has been concerned with special problems of nutrition of the aging, and has had programs on this subject at the center. The Mental Health Association, through its committees on film review and education, has provided programs or films for senior citizens and a group discussion series for older people at the center.

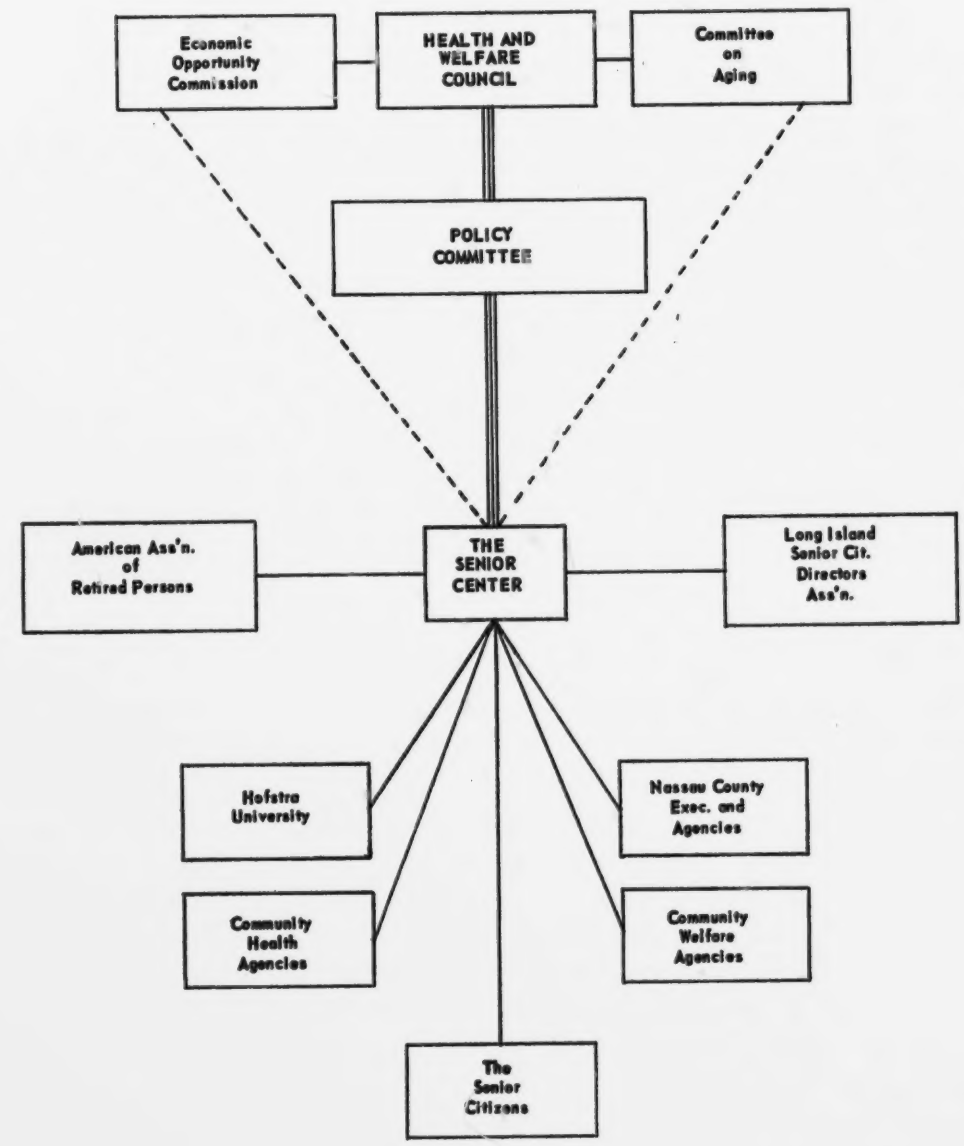
Both public and private social agencies have participated in the setting up and manning of an Information and Referral Service at the center, with the Department of Public Welfare, Catholic Charities and the Jewish Community Services of Long Island, all making staff available on a part-time basis to conduct this service.

The center was the focus of the operations of "Medicare Alert" for the county, and was so designated by the Economic Opportunity Council, which operates out of the Health and Welfare Council, and is an arm of the coordinating group. Various recreational agencies, including the County Department of Recreation, cooperate with the center in planning and offering special facilities in this area, including bus trips to out-of-state places, as well as special tours to theatres and plays.

This list could be very extensive were all the community groups and their activities relating to the senior center to be included. The center has been awarded a grant from the U. S. Department of Health, Edu-

cation and Welfare, Administration on Aging, for a centrally operated and demonstrated special activity program for senior citizens that can have considerable influence on the shaping of services for all the elderly on the local level.

Thus, an organization like the senior center in any setting, properly related to other community services and systems, can function as an important and vital part of a community effort to plan more effectively for its senior citizens.


Economic Opportunity Commission
HEALTH AND WELFARE COUNCIL
Committee on Aging
POLICY COMMITTEE
American Ass'n. of Retired Persons
THE SENIOR CENTER
Long Island Senior Cit. Directors Ass'n.
Hofstra University
Nassau County Exec. and Agencies
Community Health Agencies
Community Welfare Agencies
The Senior Citizens

TRAINING TO TEACH

Beatrice K. Winik

About a year and a half ago, a few members of our craft class expressed an interest in teaching crafts to children and suggested that we add this as another activity of the center. First we met with this craft teacher and the chairman of crafts to determine the practicality of such an activity. When we agreed that such an undertaking was feasible, we approached the neighborhood representative of the Boy Scouts, and offered to teach simple crafts to a group of Cub Scouts once a week. We selected this particular group because one of our volunteers in the craft program was a "Den Mother" and felt that there was a need for such a program in her group.

We met with the organization representatives several times, and they, in turn, came to see the center and its facilities several times. Finally, they accepted our offer, but asked if we would be willing to change the focus of the activity and offer it to "Den Mothers" instead. They gave as their reason the inconvenience of the hour. Since it would have to be offered after school, there would be the problem of transporting the children to and from the center. By teaching the leaders, each of whom has from 20 to 25 Cub Scouts in her group, we would indirectly be involved in reaching approximately 200 children. We recognized the validity of their request and agreed to the change. After much time we were finally on our way.

Five members of the center registered for the training course. The course was given by the craft teacher, who met with them 3 hours a day, one morning a week, for 6 weeks. They were taught simple theories of pedagogy, methods of presentation, types of crafts suitable for children, how to relate to people, and the application of all this knowledge in difficult situations. They also attended neighborhood meetings of the "Den Mothers," at which time they recruited and explained the program.

There were 7 "Den Mothers" in our first class. Also attending were a few youngsters who had come with their mothers and for whose care we had to arrange. The class met one morning a week for 6 weeks. After "graduation" we were so proud of the accomplishment of our center members that we offered the same program to the Girl Scout Leaders.

This program added to the development and growth of the members who participated. It was especially exciting since it was truly member initiated. The service to the community had as much value as had the psychological impact on those who were trained to teach. The members gained greater insight and better understanding of other members in the regular craft program. They now know why some were slow, why some just couldn't learn, and how to cope with the physical limitations of their peer group.

Members of the community groups gained better understanding of older people, their interests, their problems. We, as well as all of you assembled here, are concerned with educating the community. This program served as a means of exposing the community not only to the existence of the center but also to the activities that are available for older people to develop educational, social, and cultural interests. One of the "Den Mothers" referred her mother to the center for crafts. This referral was just one of many that were an indirect result of the leadership training program. In the fall we expect to start the program again. We will reach out to more community organizations for whom we hope this program will prove attractive and meaningful.

PROGRAM DESIGN FOR NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES OPPORTUNITY CENTERS FOR THE ELDERLY

Joseph Despres

Within the past year the New York Association of Senior Centers prepared a report entitled *Program Design for Neighborhood Service Opportunity Centers for the Elderly.*[1]

This was accomplished with the help of a planning grant from the New York City Anti-Poverty Board, the generous help of many individuals, the unstinting efforts of professional staff and a large number of the elderly themselves. It presents a model program which may be used in its entirety or in part to augment an existing center or to establish a new one.

It is designed to serve the elderly poor whether their improverishment results from social, emotional, or financial deprivation. It is primarily focused on locating the aged, identifying their specific needs, maintaining contact with them, and insuring the provisions of consistent, comprehensive, coordinated service.

Perhaps this model will help to alter the usual emphasis of senior centers from social and recreational activities to stress on income maintenance, reaching out to elderly neighbors, health service, education, part- or full-time employment, older adults in the community working with younger people and involvement of the aged in solving their own problems. It emphasizes the great opportunity for older people in the larger community where the elderly give, rather than receive, service.

In each area covered, this document sets forth the purpose of the service and suggests the method of operation, the structure and responsibilities of the group, guidelines for training nonprofessionals, timetable, and personnel.

Rather than take time for a detailed description of "Program Design,"[1] copies of the publication are available for study. In reading the report, bear in mind that this Design was compiled for the specific purpose of taking advantage of anti-poverty funds. It is interesting to

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[1] New York Association of Senior Centers, Inc. *Program Design for Neighborhood Service Opportunity Centers for the Elderly.* (New York: New York Association of Senior Centers, July 1965).

note the OEO Project of the National Council on the Aging and the "Program Design" have many features in common, which further attests to the validity of both. The fact that anti-poverty projects were in mind does not mean that older people generally need most of the program described any less than those of their age group who may be economically less fortunate.

The document, *Program Design for Neighborhood Service Opportunity Centers,* has been requested by public and voluntary agencies across the country, and it was reproduced in its entirety by the Special Committee on Aging of the U. S. Senate.

THE FOURSCORE CLUB

Expanding the Services for the Older, Older American — or to Avoid Dropouts in Your Senior Citizens Program

Theresa Benedick

The United States is undergoing a demographic revolution. Demography is the science of population, and seldom do we live a day without being reminded of the increasing number and percentage of aging persons in our population.

In 1959 we had a substantial increase in attendance at the Cortland Senior Citizens Club. Upon closer observation and by examining records, it was noted that the older, older members were not attending the meetings. After a short survey, it was revealed that the 80 plus group was absent because meetings had become too large, too noisy, and the direct light from the windows bothered them. They did not feel free to draw the draperies since this was not a problem with the younger group. The need to remedy this problem seemed to be immediate and urgent. We talked to several of the older members about the possibility of having a separate group and a different day on which to meet. The suggestion was so warmly received that within a few weeks it became a reality.

On October 12, 1959, we embarked (as did Columbus) on a new adventure. We met at noon at the Y.W.C.A. with a dinner and organizational meeting. Sixteen members were present.

We have just completed the annual report for the Fourscore Club which includes these statistics: The present membership is 52. We have had 15 new members this year. There have been 40 meetings with an accumulative attendance of 1,072, or an average of 27 per meeting. The oldest male member is 91 years of age and is chairman of the Sick Committee. The group has officers, and by their own choice conduct meetings according to "Roberts Rules." There have been two marriages, and one couple is "going steady." Remember, Genesis 2:18 which reads: "It is not good that the man should be alone."

What can this group do for the community? The volunteer service of this group is not to be underestimated. They have never refused a task. Examples: The group purchased paint, and two members painted the Y.W.C.A. kitchen. Since we meet at the Y.W.C.A., this agency has

first priority. We have polished the silver, darned swim suits, helped with the dinners served at Y.W.C.A., given a hand at rummage sales, addressed and stamped their antique show cards and worked on Easter Seals.

What community courtesies are extended to this group? They are invited to a formal tea given by the president of the local college at his home, to a Christmas dinner by a local citizen, to a garden party by an ardent gardener, to the senior high school plays, to reserved seats at concerts, and attend all of these activities by free taxi services or in private cars. Sharing is one of the blessings bestowed upon this group!

Weekly meetings, which include dinner and varied programs, are enjoyed by the group, also outings in the summertime. The most popular programs are those involving music and travel. A highlight of the year is the Lenten series where our local clergymen serve as guest speakers. Some members belong to the Bowling League of the Cortland Senior Citizens.

What is the relationship of this group to the younger (60 plus) senior citizens? The Forescore Club acts as a catalyst for their "brother" group in an emotional and physical sense. The younger "senior" does not think that being eighty is the end of the line because the evidence is real, as he sees the older group in action. Actually the Fourscore Club has the choice of participating in both groups, so there is no cutoff point at which members feel rejected. The strong points of this program are the three R's — Recreation, Recognition and Respect. Life is a precious gift, those who have guarded it should be respected.

The rollcall at meetings is important, standing up and being counted, having recognition — these serve as an incentive to get well and be welcomed back by the group. The phone call to the absentee shows that someone cares enough to call. These and other forms of positive action make for recognition.

HEALTH SERVICES IN CENTER PROGRAM

By Louis Berman

Tilden and Van Dyke Day Centers for Older People comprise 2 of the 40 centers operated by the Bureau of Special Services of the New York City Department of Welfare. The variety of health services offered to our 650 members is generally typical of those provided in the other centers, except for the special situation inherent at Van Dyke, located as it is in the first public housing facility in New York City built for and occupied exclusively by older people.

Immediately after this building was occupied, the importance of organizing a group to make a health check on the tenants in all of the apartments was recognized. A committee was formed to cover each apartment on a floor-by-floor and day-by-day basis. This worked so well that on many occasions we were able to avert what might have been a tragedy by finding an individual living alone who had become too ill to summon assistance. Since almost half of the families consist of single individuals, the value of this broad type of coverage can be appreciated. It is very significant that the tenants of the building, who have developed a close relationship with one another, have gotten to know each other's habits so well, that it is unnecessary for them to continue with the more formal features of their checkup program. Now every floor captain is very well aware of the habits of his neighbors. In addition, the Visiting Committee fulfills a very important function in uplifting the spirits and maintaining the morale of the members despite illness. Visiting Committee representatives visit sick members in their homes and in the hospital. The importance of these visits is indicated by the speeches of gratitude voiced by members who recover from their illness and ask for an opportunity to express their thanks at a membership meeting.

The centers have taken the initiative in establishing a relationship with other community agencies, which makes it possible to utilize their services so that referrals can be arranged for appropriate help, for hospitalization, for after-care, foster home referral, etc. This has proven to be of invaluable assistance to members so referred.

The local health district has been most helpful in arranging for preventive health services for the great majority of the members. A public health nurse, assigned from the local health district on a monthly basis, counselled the members on health problems, supported them in

accepting needed medical care including hospitalization, and guided them on health matters for which a public health nurse is especially suited. Mass innoculations against Asian Flu, Tetanus and periodic X-ray for the members by a mobile unit, considerate enough to station itself outside the center, were provided. Cancer, diabetic, and glaucoma detection tests were arranged, nutrition classes begin this fall, and the obesity clinic is one of the most successful in New York City.

One advantage of living in a large, urban community is the accessibility of many health agencies. We have taken advantage of this fact by obtaining the services of medical specialists as guest lecturers. Among these were speakers from the New York Heart Association, American Cancer Society, Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation, and the Food and Drug Administration. As an agency of the Department of Welfare, the day centers maintain a close liaison with the local Welfare Center so that recipients of public assistance can be referred for medical care, Homemakers Service, Nursing Home referrals and other health needs.

The centers provide their members daily with a full lunch at nominal cost. The consultative services of a Department of Welfare home economist help the members of the refreshment committee plan well-balanced menus. The centers were fortunate enough to have the services of a skilled clinical social worker who recently retired, and who meets regularly with a selected group of eight members to help them work through their personal problems. Another group of members participated in a home nursing course over a three-month period, conducted by the Red Cross. Upon its termination the pupils were qualified as instructors in home nursing.

The counselling services performed by staff members to the day center members serve to emphasize the fact that basically the entire day center program is a mental health program. This can be illustrated by citing the example of Mrs. K, who, to quote her, "made an oath never to have a good time" since a son was killed in World War II. Her self-imposed isolation ended with her attendance at a membership birthday party, the first such participation in years.

The members are proud of the part they played in having Medicare legislation passed, through their letters, telegrams, resolutions, and petitions. In addition to providing an excellent opportunity for social action, it also resulted in the development of a group identification and in individual feelings of usefulness and accomplishment.

Finally, because of its implications and ultimate application, a project as yet not begun should be mentioned. The New York City Welfare Department has entered into an arrangement with Brook Dale Hospital for a complete, integrated, and comprehensive medical plan to be initiated January 1, 1967. This will begin with the 3,000 O.A.A. recipients residing in a designated geographic area encompassing both Tilden and Van Dyke Day Centers, and will provide multiphase care, preventive as well as therapeutic, both inpatient and outpatient. It is to be hoped that the experience gained in this pioneering project will prove invaluable in the implementation of the recently enacted State medical aid legislation.

PART VI

PANEL DISCUSSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

Problem Clinic

Panel Members: Edward G. Lindsey, Moderator: Elizabeth Dale, Vito Giordano, Sylvia Greenfield, Barbara Jamieson, Lucille Keefe, Bernard Schwartzberg.

In anticipation of the fact that group leaders participating in the seminar would, in all likelihood, want advice on problems not specifically included in the program, an opportunity was provided for participants to submit questions in advance of the seminar for consideration by a panel of experienced club and center leaders. These questions were grouped into topics and turned over to the panel which met in advance of the session to plan the discussion. In the interest of time specific individuals were selected to address themselves to specific topics.

The discussion focused on the following areas: (1) health-mental health; (2) new goals for social action; (3) more effective use of older persons for volunteer service in the community; (4) limited paid employment for older persons; (5) program development; (6) meeting community needs for group programs.

HEALTH-MENTAL HEALTH

Question: How can a group leader help prevent unnecessary physical and mental deterioration?

Response: (Bernard Schwartzberg): It is the responsibility of the leader of a senior citizen group to try to keep members in the mainstream of life both physically and mentally. In order to maintain his mental health, the older person must be helped to continue to relate to people and have the ability to receive and respond to stimuli. There is a close coordination between physical and mental health.

At the same time, the leader must recognize that there are certain limitations to the activities of the older person because of the growing-old process of the body. The leader must be aware of these phenomena, and try to help the member prevent "progression of deterioration" through encouraging the use of medical advice and skills.

The leader can assist the older person to broaden his emotional viewpoint by affording him the opportunity to maintain and enlarge his interests. However, the leader cannot and should not try to be a mental

health specialist; where conditions seem to warrant it, professional advice should be sought in helping the older person with mental deterioration.

Question: What are the defenses commonly found in working with older persons in clubs and centers?

Response: This is an almost impossible question to answer in a short time. Briefly let me say it is important for the leader to recognize that the personality of the older person does not start at a given age, but grows from birth on, and is really a combination of three factors:

a. an outgrowth of his culture, since he is the recipient of relevant attitudes about life in general and aging in particular
b. the logical culmination of a massive aggregate of lifelong interpsychic phenomena
c. the report of cumulative biological alterations which establish certain physiological needs and limitations.[1]

In addition, the leader has to recognize several truisms in dealing with human beings, which in general, apply to the older person as well. Firstly, every bit of behavior has *meaning* and should be looked at in this light. Secondly, we judge motivation by the results of the behavior. Finally, all people have the tendency to project on their own feelings related to earlier experiences. Thus, the group leader, as "authority," can have feelings related to him which belong to earlier authorities.

If the group leader is able to recognize and not take as personal any defensive reaction of the older person, and is able, as well, to protect the individual from the negative results of his behavior with others, he will be helping the older person to have a more meaningful experience.

Question: How effective and realistic are mental health discussion groups?

Response: In my opinion discussion groups on personal adjustment matters for older persons have considerable value, and permit ventilation of feelings, sharing of views of other older people, and some modification of attitudes, which are not too emotionally laden and too deeply entrenched. This has been my personal experience in conducting groups of this nature for the past 15 years in Nassau County, most recently at the Senior Center in Uniondale, and at the Great Neck Senior

[1] Maurice E. Linden. "The Emotional Problems of Aging." *Psychiatry in Medicine.* N. E. Brill ed. (University of California Press, 1962).

Center. I feel that it is a mistake to call them "mental health discussion groups," because, especially with the older person, mental health too often is confused with mental illness.

This conclusion is also shared by the authors of a recent publication in this field,[2] who discuss the values of discussion series of this nature, and note " the older person is more apt to bring personal and practical problems to the leader . . . and to benefit from the opportunity to bring things to him."

I do not agree, however, with the point of view that this can be done by any group leader, since I feel that there are special skills involved and talents needed, with training for this role desirable. I also wish to caution against thinking that this will help all club members, all members of the discussion group, or take the place of individual assistance when this is necessary.

NEW GOALS FOR SOCIAL ACTION

Question: What should be some new goals for social action?

Response: (Sylvia Greenfield) : Dr. Miller, in a major paper presented here, categorized the aging group as a subculture and emphasized the need of the aging for *reality roles.* In the present climate of group self-assertion, the opportunity of the older person for personal involvement and a passionate stake in community affairs is *real.* Any other course is movement towards disengagement. Older persons must, therefore, be helped to feel the strength of their growing numbers — not as a *sub-culture* but as a *peer culture.* They should be aided in establishing an identity easily lost in a myriad of youthful endeavors with which we are eternally surrounded.

We, then, as staff have a significant responsibility in promoting a *reality* role. I do not think, of course, that social action should be the major function of a senior center. We have talked almost two days of major functions of centers and clubs; of the imperative need:

to promote relationship,
to reestablish individual and group identity,
to create interesting and zestful activities,
to emphasize the use of the remaining strengths of older persons.

If we define Social Action as — a *process* evoked by a group, working for improvement of a *social situation,* in their own or the

[2] W. H. Klein, E. J. Le Shan and S. Furman. *Promoting Mental Health of Older Adults Through Group Methods.* (Man. Society for Mental Health, 1965).

larger community, by their *own efforts* as the result of their *own awareness* — then all elements of a social action program are incorporated within the framework of these functions. I am strongly convinced that it is leadership's responsibility to make them a part of center and club life as they are a part of real life. Nonpartisanship is a myth often confused with objectivity. Without *partisanship* there is no involvement and without involvement, there is no commitment.

How effective can a center or club program be if it does not encourage involvement by helping older persons:

to feel a part of a larger whole,
to recognize and feel a part of a positive, constructive power structure,
to know that participation is effective and valuable,
to develop convictions of a contagious nature so that they can inspire, infuse, and impart to others,
to have a strong personal stake,
to recognize that change is an inevitable course in human events,
to afford adequate opportunities to discuss all current issues as goals for social action — whether they are of immediate or broad consequence — of agency policy, of local governmental functioning, of new legislation, of taxes, of civil rights, or of war or peace?

How effective can a center or club program be if it does not stimulate members:

to seek and study diverse views,
to select alternatives,
to formulate proposals,
to recommend change?

How sound is a center program which does not encourage ACTION — a willingness:

to do,
to read,
to think,
to take part,
to petition,
to go,
to come,
to decide on all issues?

Older persons have diminished opportunities and action for decision-making — a vitalizing life process. In social action, as I define it,

the "*process*" may be contentious, the "*social situation*" controversial, the "*awareness*" dissident and the "*efforts*" argumentative. Fortunately, the results of educational involvement and action may often be consensus. However, for those times when we must face the risk of dissent in conforming places, it may give us strength to remember and to remind others that the generation we serve today has afforded us the heritage of a "Great Society."

Response (Vito Giordano): "Medicare Alert" certainly proved the resourcefulness of our older adults. Their experiences and skills, however, should not be utilized solely for "special" projects and campaigns but incorporated into the everyday life of the community. This can be accomplished through a variety of means. Older adults, especially retirees, should be encouraged to serve on commissions and boards in the areas of recreation, education, civil service, health planning, etc. Civic and fraternal organizations, church groups, all furnish excellent opportunities for the resources of older adults. Retirees can devote much more time serving in the aforementioned capacities than individuals who are called upon to serve in a collateral capacity.

Group leaders should help guide their members toward social action, but the individual must take the initiative in making his skills and experience available. The approach must be a positive one arising out of the individual's sense of duty and responsibility.

MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF OLDER PERSONS AS VOLUNTEERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Question: What is involved in getting public and private agencies to use the knowledge and skills of older persons as volunteers?

Response (Elizabeth Dale): Good public relations is one of the key tools in getting public and private agencies to use the knowledge and skills of older persons as volunteers. The center leader must know her community and personally relate to as many agencies as possible to develop programs and opportunities for volunteer service.

The success of the volunteer community service program depends largely on thorough background work and planning. Start simply, use imagination, focus on the opportunities readily available in and out of the center, gradually add dimension, evaluate. The leader must, in a sense, be a "promoter," but, more important, a "teacher" concerned with that tremendous human resource available to the community.

Most important, the center or club cannot live "off" the community, it must live "with" it! A good center program makes for good public relations.

LIMITED PAID EMPLOYMENT FOR OLDER PERSONS

Question: How can a community create more meaningful outlets for the energies, knowledge, and skills of senior citizens through limited, reimbursed employment?

Response (Vito Giordano) : An outlet for such skills can be achieved through an employment service for older adults.

The Senior Personnel Employment Committee of White Plains is an example of such a service. It was established by a volunteer group in 1956 with the belief that "Ability is Ageless." The dual purpose of this committee is to assist senior citizens who wish to continue their activity in useful employment and to alert employers to the advantage of using mature experience and skills of older persons, thus upholding the dignity of man throughout his lifetime.

One of the founders of the Senior Personnel Employment Committee received a federal grant to prepare an outline on "How To Start an Employment Service for Senior Citizens." This paper may be procured by writing to: Senior Personnel Employment Committee, 50 Quarropas Street, White Plains, New York.

Response (Elizabeth Dale) : It seems to me that a first step in creating employment opportunities for senior citizens is to *seek help* from the professionals knowledgeable in this area. They can help to initiate a part-time employment service for center members wanting to work. In rendering such a service, proper interpretation must be made to the community. When older persons are referred for employment, their skills should be made known as well as any limitations or disabilities.

It may be that some successful center programs have few or no members interested in finding employment other than that of satisfying community service. This might truly be the criteria by which progress, sincerity of purpose, and the sum total of our efforts might be judged. However, in expanding our sights we must continue to try, and we must have the courage to fail.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Question: How can a leader widen the horizons of members and interest them in a varied, well-rounded program?

Response (Lucille Keefe) : Seeing the seminar at work, I am reminded how much we are like the members of our own individual day centers or clubs.

As we seek to improve our professional skills by searching for ways to improve programs, so members of our centers seek answers for a happier life.

When members come to us as club or center leaders, they seldom have preconceived notions of our programs. If we are able to offer stimulating programs, the new members will accept them and then will actively participate and contribute ideas for program expansion. The great danger lies in the possibility that we, ourselves, may underestimate the cultural potential of our members. Should we offer dull and uninteresting programs, the members may accept these because of their great need for companionship. Under these conditions we may lull ourselves into the belief that we are doing a good job when, in reality, the reverse may be true.

The sights of the members will be raised in exact proportion to the amount our own sights are raised. Example: Every Tuesday afternoon we have a discussion group with an average attendance of 125 people. The programs include the humanities, world and national politics, municipal and state issues, the great religions, capital punishment, divorce after sixty, etc. These programs are enthusiastically received and each presentation is followed by lively discussion.

Offer a varied, well-rounded program and there will be eager participants in every area of the program.

Response (Barbara Jamieson): Instead of encouraging one type of program for the entire club membership, it is important that several activities be offered simultaneously, thereby presenting members of the club with an opportunity for choice. Such activities should be selected with the help of a planning committee or group on which the members of the senior citizens club are well represented.

The program might include groups pursuing book discussion, travel-film discussion, health education, driver improvement, service projects, arts and crafts, language study, etc. Wherever possible, multiple sessions should be planned for each activity, as continuity is of value if any subject is to be treated in depth.

Question: How can clubs and centers attract more male participants?

Response (Lucille Keefe): We do not find this a problem. However, where this problem does exist, these hints might be helpful:

a. make each man feel that he is especially welcome
b. know each man individually — name, former occupation, hobby interests, etc.

c. try to find occasional programs of special interest to men

d. create roles of responsibility for as many men as possible. Most men "adore" being helpful.

Response (Barbara Jamieson): Frequently it is effective to organize a men's group that plans its own sessions in addition to the activities in which they join with the rest of the club or center membership.

Question: What segment of the community is *really* being served by existing club and center programs? Whom *should* the program be serving?

Response (Vito Giordano): From my experience in both a community and countywide operation, I have found that clubs and centers serve a very small percentage of the elderly population, four to five percent. The reasons are numerous, ranging from limitations caused by type of facility to the lack of trained leadership.

Question: How can persons on a "higher" or "lower" socioeconomic level be reached?

Response (Vito Giordano): The underlying principle which we must, first of all, accept is that no one program will be all things to all people. With this realization (the recognition and acceptance of individual differences, irrespective of age) it is safe to assume that a diversified program, structured to conform to the basic needs of the elderly, will have a greater chance of success in transcending socioeconomic levels. Incorporated in the framework of a club or center should be a constant awareness of high standards which are in keeping with the dignity of the older adult. High standards can only be maintained through qualified leadership, adequate facilities, and evaluation of the program in light of established goals and objectives.

PART VII

SEMINAR IMPLICATIONS

SEMINAR IMPLICATIONS

From the Point of View of Center Programs

Gertrude M. Bolden

All three provocative papers presented by the main speakers were well received. The seminar group sensed their deep convictions, their knowledge, expertise, and skill in easy communication of their findings through simple nontechnical language.

Not all agreed with the conclusions of the speakers. Many of the participants questioned Dr. Miller's recommendation of payment to older persons for performing services which they may now be giving voluntarily. Others however, felt that because of the diversity of member needs, those who are work-oriented and reflect society's status values related to the necessity of work, should be given opportunity for remunerative service.

As to volunteers, since there will always be persons with an urge to serve and/or emotional need for the status of serving without pay, centers believe they can help volunteers to improve their skills for most effective use.

The majority could see, with Dr. Miller, that there are changes now becoming more apparent in the attitude and nature of center members, and they accept the mutual responsibility for anticipating changing roles by preparing staff, agencies, and communities for these changes. At the same time, we must still work to create the most favorable conditions in which members can have meaningful activity and creative programs while continuing to learn and serve their communities in a variety of interesting and useful ways, as do other age groups.

All three speakers stressed individualization of each member by staff as an essential step in effective program operations; essential for a member's feeling of acceptance as a person, and for the group process which requires knowing the participants as a part of the proper background and approach to achieve productive results.

In the initial response to Mrs. Dobrof's paper, many expressed relief at her statement of apparent permissiveness regarding program selection. In pursuing this further with her, it was learned that she was not enunciating a program policy, about cardplaying for example, but rather emphasizing the differences in individual needs which exist whether they are accepting or rejecting center membership.

There was considerable unanimity among the staffs of larger centers as to the value of this training seminar which provided wide exposure to the practices of all kinds of centers with a chance to identify and analyze common problems, instead of emphasizing differences. In these sessions, they have shared helpful program and operational details and guidelines, and have discussed innovations which they will study further as to adopting or adapting to suit their center's characteristics. Much of this was pragmatic, down-to-earth data. For example, two afternoon workshops used role-playing of the "intake" process as a valuable and dynamic tool in examining and discussing the technique of this important first interview with the prospective member.

Other implications for large centers include the following:

We will be serving a somewhat different member group with different needs. The 1976 member and certainly the 1986 member, although possessing the same basic needs, will display striking differences which can already be perceived in 1966. This member may well be younger, more healthy and vigorous, American born, better educated, a little better off financially and less willing to remain a community subgroup. He may be more of a part-time member, but he probably will demand evening and weekend activities. He will, as an individual, tend to be more definite in what he expects from the center and probably more sophisticated in his program preferences. He will expect center services as a right, and seem a little more independent and self-directing than earlier members. He will volunteer some service to the community but will want the community to be aware of him as a person and a member of his neighborhood.

Large centers, and smaller ones too, are concerned about the need to integrate the different age groups, both chronological and emotional, which must be involved in close cooperation in carring out effective programs to meet all the member's basic expections of the center.

Regarding staff — the professional quality of staff is being enriched, and this more professional staff will be used differently, as strong member leaders and volunteers emerge. Having our professional staff train them for leadership roles will reduce the volume of direct services and consultation by the professional staff. Large centers except that the Director's role will lose much of its face-to-face relationship with each individual member and become more administrative and coordinating, with heavy emphasis on educational and public relations functions in the community. There probably will be more part-time staff than at present, and a higher percentage of men on center staffs as more centers expand to five day and full week schedules.

Education and training will be more important and will be needed:

1. to educate the community regarding center needs, costs, community resources, center goals and standards, etc.
2. for staff professional development
3. to aid members in community and social action and intergenerational contacts
4. to improve volunteer services and leadership skills.

Large centers are excited by the prospects of a future in which more potential leader-members and more older volunteers will be given increased responsibility for planning and operating certain aspects of enriched center activities. In the years ahead, this additional help will expand the limits now set by inadequate staff quotas and the reality of budget restrictions; at the same time capable members and volunteers will welcome new opportunities to develop their potentials and serve their peers and their community.

Many senior centers will become multifunctional institutions, with services of all kinds for older persons, e.g., information exchanges, central referral services, as well as health and income maintenance, housing, employment, services, etc. Government subsidies of various types will continue, and probably increase, and will become part of the funding of most centers, whether public or private.

It is also expected that training seminars of this kind will be amplified and established on a regular basis and that raising of standards and enhancement of program content will inevitably follow on a general basis.

SEMINAR IMPLICATIONS

From the Point of View of Noncenter Programs

Joyce Williams

During the past few days the participants of this seminar, presently working with senior citizens' programs, have been challenged to take a hard look at programs — past, present, and future — and to perhaps accept the fact that "change is the order of the day" in the senior citizens movement.

Ollie Randall asks us to provide flexibility and a greater receptiveness to the increasingly vast human resources among the aging. We are reminded that older people want less to be done for them and to be released from the sense of dependency. Opportunities are needed for the "new breed" of elderly and, indeed, for all elderly to find the dignity and reward they deserve through self-determination, and through both the real and vicarious realization of their maximum potential as individuals and groups. The necessity for making such an appeal, I believe, implies that these potentials in man's attempt to effect his own destiny, have been frustrated. Our staffs must do a great deal of soul-searching to determine just what is being said, the nature of the problem, and needed changes.

I believe staff must evaluate the leadership sources, sources of policy determination, self-government opportunities, and the mobilization of community strength among the elderly. Center and noncenter workers, are being challenged to evaluate their roles, the roles of nonsenior volunteers, and the role of the members participating not only in a "program" but in "life." We cannot escape the challenging role of enabling people to do for themselves, nor can we escape the just criticism of doing for those with potential for self-determination and thus creating dependency.

The young, blind girl in the film "A Patch of Blue" was able to effect her own destiny when she learned to use a pay telephone. Her previous inability to do so was not because the potential was not there. She had not been given an opportunity to learn the techniques. Someone had to take care of her.

It is suggested that senior citizens groups, individuals, and their spokesmen may be saying, that in a similar manner, the senior citizens

would like to be given the skills and opportunities to plan and carry out their own bus trips, luncheons, program planning and countless other program elements in the center and noncenter settings. Senior citizens, as individuals and as groups, are usually capable of managing their own dealings with the many public and private agencies and businesses in the community, and can, with dignity, speak for their own interests in their own local neighborhoods. They are needed for social action in their own behalf. What is more, it is a much better approach to social and mental health. This, I believe, is part of what is meant by keeping the elderly in the mainstream of life.

These are the opportunities and choices that centers and clubs should be offering to their membership along with educational opportunities, recreation, and the host of other program services of the senior center. Today's senior will demand these choices, and the center or noncenter program that cannot or will not give the elderly such an entree into society will find them going elsewhere. Centers and noncenters are challenged to provide the maximum number of choices for participation in life by their members.

One of my favorite images applied to programs for senior citizens is that of the bus traveling through a maze of roads, picking up its passengers at their chosen stops and discharging them when they reached their destination, each passenger having a potential for many boardings and constantly changing destinations. The bus is the program, of course. The riders should be able to effect its course of travel and their own use of its service.

Before proceeding further with the implications of this seminar, I should like to state that it has been with futility that I try to focus on implications which relate to a "noncenter" program any differently than to a center program. Essentially I believe that the general goals and purposes of both center and noncenter call for programs for the elderly which are similar in that they are dealing with basic needs and problems faced by a particular grouping in our society. These basic and common factors are the focus to which I have related.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

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* Committee includes officers of regional leadership councils effective January 1966.

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